


INVERNESS



BEFORE RAILWAYS

ISOBEL ANDERSON



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INVERNESS BEFORE RAILWAYS.

BY

ISABEL HARRIET ANDERSON.

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A. AND W. MACKENZIE.

1885.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF OLD INVERNESS.



THAT Inverness has greatly advanced in many ways, within the last thirty years, and is a much wealthier and much more important place than of old, admits of no denial. Whether there is as much genial intercourse amongst those in the same rank of life, and as much sympathy and freedom from rivalry between the various classes as characterised the old town long ago, is a question regarding which there may be a diversity of opinion.

When those old Invernessians who have been for many years absent from their native town, return to visit it, they are impressed not so much by the numerous new streets and buildings, and the general appearance of activity and prosperity, as by the decay of the old families and the rise of new ones. Many representatives of the old county families still reside in the neighbourhood of Inverness, but—speaking only of the town and the townspeople—among the leaders of fashionable society in the Highland Capital

there are but few descendants of those who filled the same place thirty or forty years ago, few probably that have the slightest idea who really ruled Inverness society at that period. The descendants of many of those old leading families, too, would feel strange and bewildered, were they now to return and settle in Inverness.

"I do not know a single name," exclaimed a gentleman, who, after an absence of thirty-five years, lately paid a hurried visit to Inverness. He had walked along Ardross Terrace, had gone round by Drummond, and, in fact, visited nearly every suburb of the town, inquiring who resided in each handsome villa that he passed, or in each old mansion—though of these but few now remain—which had once been the abode of old friends ; but the names which fell upon his ear, in reply, had a strange and unfamiliar sound. "There is only one place in Inverness," he added sadly, "where I meet at every step with the old familiar names, and that place is the Chapel-yard !"

The habits of the Inverness people have changed much more within the last thirty years than in the sixty years which went before. Since the opening of the Inverness and Nairn railway in 1855, not only have a number of strangers come to reside in the Highland Capital, causing a spirit of competition to arise, and an impetus to be given to progress and activity, but their ever-extending arrival and settle-

ment have caused a gradual but complete revolution in the ways of what had for many years been a quiet exclusive little town, in which the advent of a stranger from the South was an event apt to be regarded with a degree of trepidation as well as excitement. As one new family after another came to settle here, and the heads of the old families died in rapid succession, new manners and customs, the effect of competition and ambition, quickly supplanted the primitive old-fashioned ways which had been handed down from one generation to another.

Thirty-five years ago there were only a few classes in Inverness, and these were clearly defined, but this did not prevent each class from taking a kindly interest in the other. One great characteristic of Inverness at that time was the small estimation in which wealth was held, and the small influence which the possession of it involved. This may be accounted for by the fact that the leaders of society in the town were all people of moderate income. The Inverness lawyers and bankers lived mostly in plainly furnished houses above their banks and offices, and the shopkeepers in still plainer houses above their shops.

The usual dinner hour was four o'clock, but it was changed to five or half-past five when there was a party—six o'clock dinners being given only by the county families, or those who were considered on the same level. Young unmarried people were not often

invited out to dinner, but were asked to come to tea at seven, and were expected to be found waiting in the drawing-room, when the elder ladies left the gentlemen seated over their wine. If the gentlemen were very long of leaving the dining-room (which was often the case when a tray had been brought in with materials for toddy—of which the ladies were always expected to partake before leaving), tea and coffee were handed round to the visitors who had arrived only after dinner, and the young ladies were requested to give a little music to hasten the arrival of the loiterers in the dining-room. The young people in the drawing-room were apt to get very impatient when the gentlemen sat long over their toddy and port wine, but as these were the days of toasts, their patience was often sorely tried. These were the days, too, when it was the custom for people to drink wine with each other. The host always asked the lady on his right hand, and each gentleman asked both the lady whom he had taken in to dinner and the one seated directly opposite to him, if he might have the pleasure of drinking wine with them, and so on, until every one had drunk wine with several others. Before taking wine with any one, the glass had to be filled up anew, though the ladies generally only touched it with their lips, after the honour had been requested of them more than once or twice. Then both parties bowed to each other, the gentlemen often saying,

“Your very good health,” and the lady, “Thank you—the same to you”. Latterly, however, it became the custom to omit the words, and merely to bow.

The loud and hearty cheers of the gentlemen over their toasts used to reach the drawing-room, and many a young lady used to exclaim, “How merry they are ! Ah ! I fear we shall have to wait long for our dance”. But often if there were any young unmarried men among the waiting company—such as Captain Shervington, the recruiting officer (who usually wore the Highland dress), John Fyvie (the Dean’s eldest son), and Doctor Wilson (at that time a young, handsome, attractive man, much sought after in society)—a dance was started even before the company in the dining-room had made their appearance.

These dances were generally kept up until ten or eleven o’clock—alternately with songs, sung with taste and feeling—and then more toddy, negus for the ladies, and such light refreshments as custards, jellies and tartlets were handed round.

In the case of tea-parties, however (which were much more frequent in Inverness than dinners), there was always a substantial supper laid out on the dining-room table at ten o’clock—a most substantial “tea” having also been laid out there and partaken of at the primitive hour of half-past six.

At the tea parties, charades, round games of cards, and that old-fashioned game “consequences,” generally

alternated with the dances and songs, and the entertainment was kept up till a late hour. The tea-parties cost nearly as much as the dinners (for in those days three or four courses were considered ample at a dinner party—entrées being things unknown except at the tables of a few of the leaders of fashion), but they were much more enjoyable, and were indeed charming when enlivened by the fine singing of John Fyvie, Miss Jane Chisholm, or the daughters of Doctor Nicol. The ballads of Thomas Haynes Bayly were very fashionable at that period, and John Fyvie sang them with exquisite taste and feeling, as well as many other ballads, the very names of which are unknown to the young people of the present day. “Jeannette and Jeannot,” “I’ll hang my harp on a willow tree,” “The minute gun at sea,” and “I’m going, Jessie, far from thee” were among the best songs of the Dean’s son. John Fyvie’s songs and Major Greenwood’s wit used to make the time fly quickly in several Inverness drawing-rooms, where also many a pathetic Scotch or Irish air was played by Miss Georgie or Miss Bella Suter, many a brilliant waltz or polka by Miss Eliza Munro.

An invitation given only two or three days beforehand was considered quite sufficient for a dinner party, and an invitation to a tea party was often given only on the previous day.

Another great institution in Inverness was the supper party, to which only gentlemen were invited,

although the ladies of the house were always expected to appear. Fish, toasted cheese, and porter or ale, always formed part of the feast, and songs, speeches and anecdotes flowed on in rapid succession as long as the party were seated round the table.

Old Mrs. Denoon, when she lived on Castle Street, was famed for her supper parties; and her son David, that courteous and ceremonious gentleman of the old school, was, notwithstanding his grave, formal manner, at great demand at all the supper parties given in Inverness by his old schoolfellows, long after his amiable and gentle brother Alick had settled in London.

Long ago (up to the period of his death in 1838), the life of all the supper parties in Inverness was Banker Alexander Mackenzie of Woodside, familiarly known as “Johnny Cope,” from his capital rendering of that song, although it was matched by the way in which he sang “Let Whig and Tory all agree”.

It was the habit also for many of the Inverness gentlemen to drop in without any invitation, at one another’s houses at the supper hour, which was usually nine o’clock, and have a friendly chat over a tumbler of toddy.

At one time it was the custom to give breakfast parties in Inverness, but that practice died out long before the supper parties. Miss Annie Grant, Kilmonivaig, was about the last person in the town that kept up the old custom of inviting her friends to breakfast.

The hour was always nine o'clock, and the tea and coffee prepared by Miss Annie's hands, before blindness had sealed her eyes, and the hot rolls which were always laid in readiness on each plate, before the guests sat down, were considered unequalled at any table in Inverness.

Of course when the dinner hour was four o'clock, there were no such things in Inverness as hot luncheons and five o'clock teas, but it was the invariable custom to offer wine and cake to every one who called, at whatever hour, or from however short a distance they might come. In fact no visitor to either parlour or kitchen was ever permitted to go away without being asked to eat and drink. A lady coming from only the next street would have considered the hostess to fail strangely in the duties of hospitality if refreshments were not produced. In most houses, a tray with rich cake and sweet biscuits, and with port and sherry (for claret was at that time little used, though it was the favourite beverage of an earlier generation), was laid on a side table in the drawing-room, every forenoon, to be in readiness for any visitors that might happen to call. It was not then thought vulgar to press people to eat, or old-fashioned to introduce guests to one another. It was the rule then, and not the exception, for every gentleman to raise his hat entirely from his head, when bowing to a lady, and to draw off his glove before shaking hands with her. It

was also the custom for every gentleman to offer his arm to any lady who might be walking along the street with him.

In those days, when every one was more or less hospitable, and the set of fine-looking courtly bankers, for which Inverness was at that time noted, vied with each other in keeping open house, there was no one who dispensed hospitality with a more lavish hand, no one who was more generous to all who needed help, than Mr. Mackenzie, Ness House (Agent for the Bank of Scotland). Not only did his birth and connections, his singularly aristocratic appearance, and exquisite courtesy secure for him the undisputed precedence, but he was about the last to maintain in Inverness the manners and customs of a former generation, and was even in those days considered the *beau ideal* of a Highland gentleman of the olden time. Visitors came to Ness House as freely as they would come to an hotel. Invitations were not needed, for an equally hearty welcome awaited every guest, whether invited or uninvited. On the sideboard in the dining-room, refreshments stood ready from morning to night for all comers, whilst a quaintly-shaped whisky bottle, with which "to speed each parting guest," was a fixture on the entrance-hall table. Any person of note who visited Inverness, was sure to bring a letter of introduction to Mr. Mackenzie, and then dinners, drives and picnics to

Foyers and Kilmorack and the various beautiful places around, were sure to follow. Hospitality was, however, the least distinguishing trait of a noble character. His fine, free, forgiving, though hot nature, is not forgotten to this day, especially in Kintail, where his granduncle, General Mackenzie Fraser, and Lord Seaforth, raised, at their own expense, the gallant 78th Highlanders ; and his own faith in the Highlanders and strong feelings of clan-ship, made him launch in the world with disinterested generosity many who thus advanced to fortune through his means.

Mr. Mackenzie was unanimously elected the first Provost of Inverness after the Reform Bill had passed, and on retiring from office, his townsmen presented him with a very valuable piece of plate, whilst they urged him to permit them to return him to Parliament ; but he was too rooted to his life in the Highlands to leave them—even refusing the appointment of Governor of the Mauritius (very lucrative in those days), which was offered in recognition of his efforts in the Liberal cause.

When Mr. Mackenzie died suddenly in 1854, his funeral was the greatest that had been known for many years. The tenants of the Flowerburn estate (of which he had undertaken the management at the dying request of his great friend, the grandfather of the present Laird), erected a handsome

marble tablet to his memory in the Cathedral of Fortrose.

Mrs. Mackenzie, who survived her husband till 1883 had long left the Highlands, where she had maintained the Banker's hospitality with equal individuality; but there must be many still in the North who remember her high-bred manners and queenly form, and there are certainly some there who can testify to the warmth of her heart and the constancy of her friendship. Mrs. Mackenzie was a lady of cultivated mind and refined tastes, an admirable musician, artist, and linguist, at a time when such gifts were rare. She had also a great amount of quiet humour, and possessed a large store of amusing anecdotes, which she had the gift of telling remarkably well. Her family was an ancient Forfarshire one, the Piersons of Balmadies (the brasses on their tombs in the Abbey of Arbroath still show the antiquity of the family), but she was born and educated in Russia, in which country she ever maintained deep interest, whilst entertaining the strongest affection for Scotland, where she had passed all her married life. Intense love for and appreciation of everything connected with the Highlands formed one of the chief characteristics of this high-bred lady of the old school.

It has been alleged that in those days of universal hospitality the Inverness people lived in a continual whirl of gaiety; but although there were many little

social gatherings, a regular course of party-giving on a large scale was kept up by only about seven or eight families, who, in several instances, were bound together by ties of close and sincere friendship and affection. Changed as Inverness is now, a faint memory lingers there still of the parties given, not only at Ness House, but by the two families who reigned in succession at Viewmount (those of Doctor Munro and Sheriff Colquhoun), and also by the families of Banker Mackay and Doctor Nicol—parties as mirthful as they were brilliant.

But though there was much more private gaiety in those days, there were few public balls, few public entertainments of any kind. Ladies, in particular, may be said to have lived far less in public than they do now. They never sang or played at public concerts, collected subscriptions, or became members of associations or committees of any kind, whether for secular or sacred purposes.

Christmas was then, more than now, a time for hearty, social gatherings. On Christmas and New Year's Day people always went in the afternoons to see their friends and wish them happiness, and though there were no Christmas cards and no decorating of churches, it was the custom at that season to make little gifts for all one's friends, relations, and servants which cost little money, but a great deal of labour, and were, on the latter account, highly valued.

For four or five days before Christmas, boys, who were called “Bulliegeizers”—whatever that may mean—went round every night at seven or eight o’clock singing loudly at the street doors, and of course expecting pennies. The arrival of these boys outside was always a source of delight to the children within, for it reminded them that Christmas was close at hand.

On Christmas Eve a great packing of baskets with tea and sugar, currant loaves, and pieces of meat, for favourite retainers and pensioners, went on in many households, at which the children were not only permitted to assist, but were allowed to accompany a servant with the baskets to the houses of the various recipients, in order that they might acquire a *personal* interest in those whom their parents befriended.

On Christmas morning in most households the servants were sent for to the dining-room to drink the health of their master and mistress, and receive a piece of shortbread, and some little gifts worked for them by the children’s own hands; and during breakfast a message often came from the kitchen that some of the pet beggars of the family—such as Walter Sim and “Water Lexy”—had “called to wish every one a merry Christmas,” which, of course, was the signal for some eager child to run down stairs with a shilling for each of the grateful visitors.

Thus, in many homes in Inverness in those days, Christmas was a day of more satisfying happiness for the children than it is at present, when they are surfeited with Christmas cards and costly gifts. In those days toys and books were much more expensive than they are now, and children did not get so many of them: therefore they dearly prized the few they did get. They were not loaded on their birthdays with jewellery and all manner of splendid presents from all their relations and acquaintances, but were quite satisfied with a sixpenny or shilling book from their parents, and no remembrance from any one else, except, perhaps, a pen-wiper or pin-cushion from some kind aunt. A shilling book with one of Miss Edgeworth's or Mrs. Hofland's tales—carefully written in excellent English—was more highly prized than a five shilling book is by any child now, and even a penny book (with the history of "Cinderella" or "Beauty and the Beast," "The Yellow Dwarf" or "The Invisible Prince"), or a penny toy such as a tin kettle or saucepan, could bestow a degree of happiness which children in the same rank of life could not possibly realise at the present day. Many a little story book did the kind bookseller "Kenny Douglas" bestow on the children of his customers at Christmas or New Year (the writer remembers receiving a highly-prized copy of "The Cottagers of Glenburnie," bound in scarlet and gold, from him as a Christmas gift); many

a little toy did "Johnny Suter" present to his special favourites among the children who flocked to his little shop in the "Black Vennel," when it was the only toy shop in Inverness.

Children went to parties at one another's houses then in nothing smarter than their Sunday clothes. A tucked soft muslin white frock and blue or tartan sash were considered the height of full dress for a little girl, and fit to be worn only at a very grand party indeed. A fine French merino or printed delaine with a crimped frill round the throat (and no jewellery except a necklace), was the usual attire. Grown-up young ladies seldom wore dresses of costlier material than muslin, tarlatane or barège, at their parties, and were not ashamed to be seen in the same garb at several successive entertainments. On their shoulders they wore a "berthe" of black or white lace, a most becoming article of dress, which looked especially pretty on a pink tarlatane or soft, pale-blue barège. The elder ladies wore long floating scarfs. Sham jewellery was never worn by any lady then; what appeared to be silver or gold really *was* silver or gold. The necklets and huge locketts of the present day were unknown then, but the usual ornament for a young lady in evening dress was a necklace of coral, pearls or amber, or a band of black velvet round the throat fastened by a tiny brooch; and for an older lady one of these long pretty gold chains which went round the

neck and descended to the waist. Every married lady—however young—wore a cap, which covered the ears, and from which long broad ribbons fell over the shoulders. The ears, indeed, were always covered in the case of any female, at whatever age. No fringes were ever seen, but the hair was divided in the middle and descended on each side of the cheek in long braids or ringlets, and was coiled behind and fastened with a tortoiseshell comb—small side-combs of tortoiseshell being often used to keep the ringlets in front from coming too much forward.

The fashions did not change then so often as they do now. The white or pale-blue drawn silk bonnets of one summer—with their close “baby fronts” of tulle, with little loops of coloured velvet all round—could always be laid aside to come out unaltered for the next; and the dark-blue velvet winter bonnets could be treated in the same way and kept in readiness till that season should come round again. The pelisses of growing girls—often made of black silk in summer and dark-green merino (trimmed with velvet of the same shade), in winter—required only to be lengthened and let out a little, a year after they had been bought.

Gentlemen wore stocks and high shirt collars, and appeared on the streets in swallow-tails, white trousers and white waistcoats. A few old country “bodachs” might still be seen in the knee-breeches, long stockings, buckled shoes, and large brass buttons, which were all

the fashion some twenty years previously. Gentlemen wore their hair much longer than at present, sometimes almost covering the ear, and descending to the back of the neck ; but shaving was then universally practised—only officers in the army ever wearing a moustache.

Elderly ladies wore reticules of black velvet or black embroidered satin attached to their sides when they went out shopping or calling—ladies who twenty years before had gone to church in white silk stockings, sandalled slippers of black satin or pruncella, dresses of soft white muslin tucked to the waist, and black silk spencers.

Servant girls in Inverness were content to go to church in gowns of printed cotton which had cost only threepence or fourpence a yard, in coarse straw bonnets whose trimming consisted of a deep curtain and a strap of ribbon across the top, and in large tartan shawls. Tartan shawls and "filled plaids" were worn by females of all classes and all ages. Little girls of twelve years old might be seen in three-cornered shawls reaching to their feet, and in large bonnets—for hats were not in fashion then—which not only shrouded their faces, but made them appear like little old women.

There was a very pretty fashion then—that of large fur tippets which descended below the waist, and were decidedly more becoming than the little fur capes of the present day. Deep fur cuffs were worn, fur

“victorines” the ends of which descended to the waist, and fur “boas” of such a length as often to touch the ground. Knitted “polka jackets” also were worn in-doors in winter, and out-of-doors under a shawl. In summer, silk “shades,” which were anything but becoming, were fastened in front of the bonnet and tied with strings under the chin. Veils too were fastened on with strings, and were so long as to descend nearly to the waist.

Ladies did not have such a number and variety of dresses then, but those they had were of very much better materials, fitted to stand tear and wear, and to be handed down to succeeding generations.

The country girls did not then ape the fashions of their superiors in rank, but went to church with only a snood of ribbon, instead of a bonnet, on their hair. The writer remembers seeing the daughters of many well-to-do farmers passing down Academy Street every Sunday to the Free East Church, with no covering on their heads. There were two beautiful girls in particular, whose rich auburn hair, guiltless of hat or bonnet, imparted a refinement to their appearance which would have been entirely destroyed if their heads had been surmounted by any imitation of the finery of their superiors. If any of the country girls had a distance to walk they used to carry their shoes and white cotton stockings in one hand (to be

put on when they approached their journey's end), and in the other a bible, wrapped in a white pocket handkerchief, and with a piece of mint or southernwood between the leaves. When one of them married—however young she might be—she always donned the expensive and elaborate “mutch,” the married woman's badge.

It was a pretty sight to see the country girls flocking into Inverness on a Martinmas Market day, each with a bright tartan shawl, fastened by a large silver brooch (generally a double heart), which had descended from one generation to another ; while their faces beamed with the expectation of “fairings” from their favourite “lads”. It was a picturesque sight also to see the “wives” in mutches, beneath which shone broad ribbons of every hue, standing beside their carts, which extended from one end of Academy Street to the other. Ladies of the best position did not think it beneath their dignity to go in and out among the carts, examining the butter and cheese, while their children, under a servant's care, delighted in wandering among the little stalls, arranged on each side of High Street, and in buying fairings, of which the most prized was generally a little churn, in which they could make real butter. High Street and Academy Street used to be even more densely packed on a Martinmas Market day than they are now, and the Academy boys used to

amuse themselves by pinning the gowns of the country women together.

Every Tuesday and Friday the country women sold their butter, eggs, and fowls on the Exchange—the butter at tenpence the pound, the eggs at fourpence or sixpence the dozen, and the fowls at tenpence each. Potatoes were sold round the lamp-post in the open space in front of the old Methodist Chapel, and there was a weighing-machine there, where not only potatoes but hay and coals and various other articles were weighed.

Before the opening of the former Fish-market place on Academy Street, there was a temporary one in a court opening from Petty Street; and at that time a dozen haddocks could be had for threepence or fourpence, and a dozen herrings for a penny, or indeed even for a halfpenny, if a herring boat happened to be at the Shore. A pennyworth of herrings, during the stay of a boat, often maintained a poor family for two days, forming, together with a few potatoes, their breakfast, dinner, and supper.

At an earlier period the Fish-market was held in a walled-in space, where the Post-office now stands; and among the old women employed to carry fish for the customers, was a big, stout character of the name of Tibby Main, who also kept a little table on High Street, close to the Market-place, where she every day sold vegetables of different kinds, and also

dulse and shell-fish. There were two similar tables on the pavement at the top of Academy Street, kept by two other old women, one of whom, a dwarf named "Wee Jenny," was as well-known a character as Tibbie Main. Except on market days, when the country gardeners brought supplies into the town for sale, the only places where vegetables, such as cabbages, cauliflowers, carrots or turnips could be obtained, were the tables of these old women.

Up to a much later date it was a practice for poor old women to sit with a basket of dulse, whelks or mussels, at the end of the Bridge or at the Post-office steps, in the hope of tempting children coming from school to invest their halfpennies.

On Hallowe'en and the previous evening, eight or nine old women from the country—sometimes from as great a distance as Glenmoriston or Kintail—used to sit on the Exchange with large bags of hazel nuts for sale, which they had carried all the way to Inverness on their backs.

Hallowe'en parties were a great institution in Inverness in those days among the upper and middle classes. Nuts were burnt, apples were ducked for, and fortunes were read by means of the white of an egg, dropped in a glass of water, and by means of three plates, one filled with clear water, one with dirty water or milk, and the third empty. The persons whose fortune had to be tried by the plates were blind-

folded, and dipped their hands at random into one of them. The plate of clear water signified a young bride or bridegroom, the milk or dirty water denoted marriage with a widow or widower, while the empty plate doomed to a life of celibacy. The forms taken by the white of an egg in the glass of clear water were sometimes very beautiful, and denoted mountains, ships at sea, or heaps of gold, according to the fancy of the spaewife, who was generally employed to read the fortunes of the young people. All the diversions generally took place in the kitchen, for the ducking for apples involved a great deal of splashing of water, and, indeed, none of the amusements were suitable for a drawing-room. Among the lower classes there were many Hallowe'en freaks, which involved going out in disguise along the streets, and, indeed, many young people in the upper classes used to join in these frolics. There was, in fact, no house in Inverness, high or low, where Hallowe'en was not kept.

Hogmanay parties were held by all classes, at which the New Year was taken in by all present joining hands round the supper table and singing "Auld Lang Syne".

The first of April, or "gowking day," was also never forgotten by any class. There was a young lady in Inverness forty years ago (long since a grandmother), who was proverbial for fun and frolic, but was so good humoured that no one could long remain offended

with her. On the morning of one “gowking day” she went to the house of a physician in Inverness, and told him to hurry to her uncle’s house, as a bone had stuck in the cook’s throat while she was eating fish for breakfast, and almost suffocated her. She then went to an upholsterer, noted for his corpulence and unwieldiness, and desired him to go to the house of a lady, residing nearly two miles out of town, with four drawing-room chairs, which she had received special orders that he himself was to carry, two on each arm, and not to send any subordinate with them. It was a very warm day, and the upholsterer was a person who got very easily heated, but the lady from whom the order was sent was considered too important a customer to be disobeyed. Imagine his dismay when he arrived at the end of his long walk and discovered that he had never been sent for ! The young lady who had made him an April fool crowned her exploits by inviting a party of nine or ten gentlemen to supper at eight o’clock that evening with an elderly bachelor, whom they found on their arrival seated in an old dressing-gown and slippers over his parlour fire, with no preparations for visitors, and who was most indignant when he found out the trick which had been played on him. Banker Wilson, who was one of the unexpected guests, good-naturedly brought all the others with him to his own house, where they had a good laugh over an excellent supper, none joining

more heartily in the merriment than Doctor Jamieson, whose ring at the door of the house where he had been summoned in the morning, had been answered by the victim of the supposed fish bone !

Another young lady in Inverness at that period gained two bets, one by going out to a dinner party in a wheelbarrow, and another by wading across the river Ness !

The Inverness young ladies at that time, however, were generally more romantic and sentimental than frolicsome. They were addicted to hero-worship, adored the memory of Prince Charlie, sang Jacobite songs, and wrote verses in each other's albums, which lay on the drawing-room centre tables, along with annuals bound in crimson silk and gold.

What simple pleasures satisfied the youth of those days, when reverence for parents and for people advanced in life had not gone out of fashion, and when girls had not learnt to talk slang ! Young people were kept more in the background then, the necessity of courtesy was more impressed on them, and they were not allowed to form so many opinions of their own, or to speak much in the presence of their elders. They were not, in fact, so entirely under the delusion that the world had been formed for them alone. Lawn tennis parties were unknown in those days. A long country walk in the daytime, or a game at bagatelle, draughts, or battledoor and shuttlecock in the

evening, was considered ample relaxation for boys and girls in their teens ; but little pic-nics were much in vogue on Saturdays to such places as Tomnahurich, Torvean, Craig Phadraig, the " Primrose Mound " above Clachnaharry, the " General's Well " near Bught, and the " Hut of Health " at Millburn. No mode of conveyance except their own feet was needed to convey the young people to their destination, and one small basket was generally able to hold all the eatables required. Tomnahurich was a very favourite spot, for no cemetery was in prospect there at that time.

Such simple pleasures made the summer pass pleasantly for the rising generation of " Old Inverness ". Their highest dissipation was when Ord's circus, or Anderson, the " Wizard of the North," came to pay the Highlands a visit. A world of enchantment was then indeed opened to them, beside which the joys of their Saturday pic-nics and little tea parties grew dim.

The older people had their pic-nics also to such places as the Falls of Foyers or Kilmorack, or to Urquhart Castle; and these pic-nics used to be very much looked forward to, as they were the only things in the form of excursions that could be had in those days, the custom of cheap fares by steamer not having then been introduced. The pic-nics of old were gone through in a leisurely style, but were sometimes jovial to a high degree.

We remember hearing of one on the return from which the carriage that took the lead belonged to a gentleman who was a very good judge of a horse, and always had a very pretty pair on which he rather prided himself. Another carriage seemed inclined to pass this one, upon which the owner of the latter (which was open), became very indignant, and standing up, waved his umbrella frantically in the air, and then pointed it at the obnoxious driver, as if it were a gun, shouting out at the pitch of his voice "If you dare approach an inch nearer, I'll shoot you". The driver (who, along with the other servants, had followed the example of the gentlemen in partaking of too much wine or whisky), imagined that he was really in danger of being shot, and did not venture to pursue his attempt of passing the foremost carriage, which was quite as well, as the umbrella would certainly have been hurled at his head, the horses might have taken fright, and a serious accident might have ensued.

The same genial and hospitable gentleman who was the hero of the episode of the umbrella, had been for so many years without drinking cold water that he had quite forgotten the taste of it. On one occasion he did not feel well, and intended taking a dose of medicine in the morning, so his wife placed it, along with a tumbler of water (to take away the taste), at the side of his bed, to be in readiness for the morning. When the lady got up, she perceived that her husband

had not taken his medicine, and challenged him about it, when he exclaimed, "Not taken my medicine! To be sure I have, every drop of it!" and pointed triumphantly to the empty tumbler, which he had drained, in the belief that he had performed a most praiseworthy action by swallowing a large quantity of medicine.

In one respect Inverness has altered for the better. It was at one time (not a very old date), the custom for several idle young men of the upper classes to accost with impertinence and follow about the streets or roads, young girls of whatever rank in society—gentlewomen or maidservants—they might be, and lay wagers beforehand as to the amount of annoyance to which they could subject them. There was also a regiment at Fort-George about forty years ago, of which several of the officers were notorious for their impertinence to ladies. They used to sit on the parapet of the old Stone Bridge, making remarks on every one who passed, and sometimes following pretty girls to the doors of their own homes. Even less than thirty years ago, there were wild young militia officers and others who used to go about at night taking the knockers off doors, hurling coaches into the river, and disturbing the slumbers of the inhabitants generally. Such customs as those have long since happily died out. Many anecdotes might be related—were there space—of the escapades which sometimes took place in Old Inverness. There was one gentleman of

high position and birth, whose estates lay in a neighbouring county, and who was often in the habit of paying Inverness a visit, and quite as often of getting into scrapes while there. On one occasion he was invited to the marriage of a friend's daughter in Inverness, and arriving in the town on the previous evening, got into a street row, and, not being known to the police, was locked into the "Black Hole". He contrived to get a pencilled slip of paper conveyed to the friend whose daughter was to be married, telling him the predicament he was placed in, and begging him to come to his rescue, which favour was speedily granted, and the prisoner was liberated. Next day he dined with the gentleman who had effected his liberation, and on taking leave, the latter spoke most seriously to him, begging him to try to behave himself better in future, for his conduct had been disgraceful, and was only bringing a scandal on himself and his family. The offender seemed very contrite and exclaimed, "I promise you, my dear fellow, this will never happen again. You shall see that I will behave myself better in future. Here is my hand upon it." The guest departed, and was not far from the door when he knocked down a man for no other reason than that he stood in his way and obstructed the path. The friend with whom this fiery gentleman had dined, being not far away, saw what had happened, and pacified the man by making the offender give him hush-money.

The usual hour for a “constitutional” walk in Inverness was three o’clock, for of course, as almost all the townspeople lived above their offices and shops, and could not otherwise obtain fresh air, the daily walk was quite an institution. At three o’clock, or a little earlier, many gentlemen might be seen issuing from their doors, accompanied by their wives and daughters—Banker Wilson being one who seldom missed his daily promenade—and it was a source of pleasure to guess what friends one might meet, difficult for those to realise who now always meet the same faces on the same road as they go to or return from town.

Sometimes, in summer, these walks were taken at a later hour, but not by the lawyers. Almost all of them took a rest at home between dinner and tea, and then returned to their offices from tea time till supper time—a custom which is now impossible, owing to late dinners and villas out of town. The Millburn Road was always a favourite resort for the afternoon walk, in order that the pretty sight might be obtained of the Star Coach dashing along for Elgin, drawn by four horses, while the guard behind, in his scarlet coat, blew his bugle loudly and merrily. The Star returned each forenoon at about twelve o’clock. The fare to Elgin was 16s. inside, and 10s. 6d. outside.

Very many years before that date, it was the custom

of old Mr. Fraser—better known as “Old Stoneyfield”—to stand at the edge of the hill on which his residence stood, to watch a return coach which passed about four o'clock, to see whether any acquaintance was among the passengers, whom he might hail and bring home to dinner; and great was his delight when he could espy some familiar face. An extra plate and knife and fork were always laid in readiness on his dining-table just before the coach passed, though Mrs. Fraser never had the least idea who the expected guest might be.

The Star Coach, on its way from Inverness, left the high road, just below Castle Stewart, and took the cross road which went round by Campbelltown. It also returned by the same route. The Defiance Coach for Aberdeen started from Inverness every morning at six, and the inspiring notes of its bugle woke many a dreamer from his slumbers at that hour. It was drawn by four grey horses, and formed a very enlivening sight, as it dashed into Inverness on the return journey at about half-past six in the evening. These coaches were always ready to stop and pick up any passenger by the way, for a short journey. One could get six miles for a shilling as outside passenger, and for eighteenpence inside. The inside was anything but comfortable, particularly if closely packed. The Defiance was perhaps more roomy than the Star, and it kept to the main road

all the way. The fare inside to Aberdeen was £2, and £1 2s. outside.

There was also a mail coach to Edinburgh by the Perth Road, which turns off from the Millburn Road, just beside the Raigmöre Lodge. It left Inverness every evening at a quarter to seven o'clock, and the return coach arrived from the south at 6 A.M. The fare to Edinburgh was £2 5s. inside, and 32s. outside. It was drawn by four horses, just like the Defiance, and had a guard in scarlet livery like both the Defiance and the Star. Seats were generally engaged on the previous day, if the journey was to be a long one, so that the guard had a good idea of how many passengers might be expected. The Aberdeen Mail started every afternoon at two o'clock, and the return coach arrived every evening at half-past seven. There were four horses, and the fare inside was £2, and outside 21s. The North Mail for Thurso, by Beauly, Dingwall, Tain, and Dornoch, started every morning at a quarter past six o'clock, and the return coach reached Inverness at 5 P.M., in time to join the Perth Mail. There were four horses, and the fare inside was £2 11s. 6d., and outside, £1 17s. 6d.; and to Tain, 20s. and 14s. The Duke of Wellington—a day stage-coach, four horses, in connection with the Highland or Perth Mail—left Inverness every morning from April to the end of November, at six o'clock A.M., and arrived from

Perth at 6 P.M. Fares—inside, 35s., outside, 25s. In summer, the Caberfeigh—stage-coach, two horses—left every day at three o'clock for Dingwall (via *Kessock Ferry*) and Strathpeffer, and reached the Spa Hotel there at 6 P.M. It left Strathpeffer at eight o'clock every morning, and arrived in Inverness at 11 A.M. Fares—inside, 10s., outside, 6s. The Duke of Wellington for Tain, started at 6 A.M., and from Tain at 3 P.M. During great part of the year, there were thus eight coaches starting daily from Inverness. The coach which went to Perth, in connection with the Highland or Perth Mail, before the time of the Duke of Wellington, was named the Prince of Wales.

In an interesting little book called "A History and Description of the Town of Inverness" [1846], by the late George Cameron, stationer, Glasgow (who was a native of Inverness and had served his apprenticeship there), mention is made of two other coaches which for some time started from Inverness every day. One of these was the "Marquis of Breadalbane," which went to Glasgow by Fort-Augustus, Fort-William, Glencoe, Loch Lomond, and Dumbarton, from the beginning of June to the end of October, leaving Inverness every morning at eight o'clock, while the return coach arrived there every evening at five. The fares throughout were £2 inside, and £1 10s. outside. The other coach was the Union,

which went every day during the summer months to Nairn by Culloden Moor, Croy, Clephanton, and Cawdor, leaving Inverness at three o'clock.

In 1836 the coach to Perth left Inverness only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, returning there on the intervening days ; so that the next few years had produced a vast improvement, for the many daily coaches starting from Inverness were all in existence a year or two later. The "Marquis of Breadalbane" was first started in 1843, during the summer months, arriving every alternate evening and departing next morning. The little book from which we have last quoted, says, "In 1845 and 1846, from the beginning of June to the end of October, this conveyance ran daily from Inverness to Glasgow. An application was made by the spirited proprietor for the carrying of the mails along the road, which, if obtained, would have enabled him to keep up the communication throughout the year ; but from some cause or other, not properly explained we believe, the application was unsuccessful."

There was one Ross-shire proprietor who never liked to be hurried or put out of his way, and on one occasion when going from Inverness to Edinburgh by the mail coach at night, he was very late, having sat too long over his second tumbler of punch after supper. His friends were afraid of his losing the coach, but all they could do to urge him to make

haste was of no avail. He did not choose to hurry his footsteps, even after the horn had been frantically blown, not only for the second time, but actually for the third time, but walked all the slower, and shouted out, "Blow away, and be d——d to you," upon which the guard, recognising him, said, "Oh! it's M——, we must just wait for him a little".

The first public coach—the Caledonian—commenced to run between Inverness and Perth in 1806, through the enterprise of the writer's grandfather, Mr. Peter Anderson, solicitor, and the journey occupied $2\frac{1}{4}$ days. Previously, the journey to Edinburgh could not be performed in less than a week, and was generally thought an occasion for making one's will. As postage was very expensive at the time the Caledonian was started, the Invernessians used to watch opportunities of sending letters by any friends who might be going south by the coach. It was a usual occurrence for Inverness people to send messages to one another, intimating that Mr. So-and-So was going next day by coach, and would take charge of a letter if it could be ready in time. And the letters of *that* time must have been really well worth receiving. They were carefully and closely written on very large sheets of paper, and were filled, not merely with local news, but with criticisms on books and reflections on various subjects. Often the writing of one of these epistles occupied nearly a

week, a fresh page being added each day, while waiting an opportunity to get it sent by coach. There were no envelopes then, and the large sheets were carefully and curiously folded and fastened with a wafer. Even little more than thirty years ago, pretty coloured wafers or sealing wax were in general use instead of adhesive envelopes. A box of fancy wafers and a coloured wax taper were indispensable requirements for a lady's writing desk.

The ladies' shopping thirty years ago differed very much from what it is at present. The old-fashioned shopkeepers of that period always expected a cordial chat with their customers across the counter, and maintained the most friendly interest in the families of the professional classes. They liked to hear how the children's lessons progressed, and they rejoiced at every marriage, and mourned at every death. Mr. Alexander Forbes, chemist on Castle Street, was a fine specimen of the higher class of Inverness shopkeepers. He was a gentleman of learning, refinement, and courtesy, whose friendship it was a privilege to possess, for his conversation could not fail to elevate the tone of one's mind. His sister, Miss Hannah Forbes, a charming and cultivated woman, was by many people considered singular, because she never wore a dress of any texture except merino, or of any colour except brown or grey. Her reason for this was that she gave away all her cast-off clothes to the

poor, and considered that any costlier material or any gayer tints might be unsuitable and useless for them.

Another worthy specimen of the Inverness shopkeepers was Mr. Donald Fraser, the draper, who was generally known as "Donald Soft," to distinguish him from his neighbour and namesake on High Street, Mr. Donald Fraser, the ironmonger. The latter went by the name of "Donald Iron," while his brother, who was in partnership with him, was known as "Thomas Steel". Well does the writer remember, when a very young child, clambering up on a high chair in the old shop on High Street, to be patted on the head by gentle Mr. "Donald Soft," and to recount to him the conquest of a new rule in arithmetic, or the history of a trip to Strathpeffer or Nairn.

What a pleasant place to pass half-an-hour in was the china shop of Mrs. Hunter on Inglis Street! It was filled with elegant dainty ornaments; and Mrs. Hunter herself, with her pretty, delicately-cut features, framed in her silver hair and black bonnet, always formed a perfect picture, whether doing the honours of her shop, or seated in St. John's Church, surrounded by her handsome talented family.

Then there was old Mr. Smith, the bookseller (father of the late Mr. William Smith, Castle Street), on the site of whose little shop on High Street the Young Men's Christian Association Buildings now stand. Mr. Smith was a handsome, white-haired,

gentlemanly man, with a most courteous and dignified manner. His shop and that of Mr. Kenneth Douglas, bookseller (on the opposite side of the street, familiarly known as "Kenny Douglas," and who attracted numbers to his shop by his jokes, repartees and anecdotes, formed, along with the Exchange, the three favourite places of rendezvous for a band of gentlemen without any profession or occupation, who met regularly every afternoon to discuss the news and take note of the passers-by. Among them were the Laird of Culduthel, the Laird of Inshes, Doctor Hugh Fraser, and Mr. Charles Lamont Robertson (commonly known as "Dandy Charlie" on account of his finical neatness). When a group of these gentlemen stood on the Exchange, it was possible to make a circuit and avoid them, but when they stood at the door of either of the two booksellers' shops, it required no small courage for lady customers to pass through and run the risk of hearing their personal remarks.

The four above-mentioned gentlemen were also fond of frequenting the shops of Slorah, the grocer and tobacconist, and of Tait, the barber and perfumer, both of which were situated on Church Street. On Sundays they generally took their stand within the gate of the old High Church and made their remarks on each lady who passed through.

At an earlier date "The Grocery" on High Street

was the favourite meeting-place of the Inverness gentlemen, and among them might always be seen the form of old Doctor Robertson of Aultnaskiah, who has been described to the writer as a gentleman of singularly refined appearance, courteous manners, and amiable disposition.

The Inverness people were fond of bestowing nick-names on their shopkeepers. Long ago there was a "Snuffy Willie," who sold snuff on Bridge Street, "Skelpan Sandy," an ironmonger on the Exchange, and "Kenny A'things," who had a shop on High Street for ironmongery, drapery, and all sorts of things, and who when asked if he sold such and such articles, always replied, "I sell a' things, I sell a' things".

The shop of Mr. Mackenzie, the confectioner on Castle Street (known as "Jamie Sweetie"), was a favourite resort for ladies thirty-five years ago. Mr. Mackenzie was the only confectioner in Inverness until the time of the "Peacock". Ready-made cakes were never to be obtained in his shop. They had always to be ordered beforehand, and pastry for private dinners and suppers had to be manufactured by private cooks at home. It was considered quite an era in Inverness, when, on the "Peacock" being established on High Street, it was ascertained that pies and tarts might be ordered there for any private entertainment. "Jamie Sweetie's" cakes and con-

fections, however, were very good, and he was very liberal to the children of his customers.

His wife was a lady by birth and education, and their only daughter, Naomi, was a singularly interesting little girl. The Mackenzies went to America while Naomi was yet a child, and from the time they sailed, her history was so romantic that it might form the subject of a novel.

With the old-fashioned shopkeepers has died out the race of old servants. Long ago servants did not care for changes, but often remained twenty or thirty years in one place, identifying themselves with the interests of the families they served, and having a deep interest shown in them by their mistresses, who treated them as friends, and submitted to hearing them speak their minds very plainly. The old servants of those days were usually designated by the surnames of the families that employed them. The old housekeepers and nurses formed a peculiar race by themselves, privileged above all other servants to speak out their minds and domineer, but of devoted fidelity, and more attached to the families they served than to their own relatives.

A characteristic specimen of this class was a quaint, active little woman, who filled the post of housekeeper successively in the families of many of the Highland lairds, including Mr. Grant of Glenmoriston, and Cluny Macpherson, and who, at one time, even

ventured to cross the Border to manage the establishment of an English gentleman. By the ladies in the houses where she served, she was often designated by the name of "Rossie," but from children and servants she was very punctilious as to receiving her title of "Miss Ross". The first situation "Rossie" ever obtained was retained by her for seven years, and in it she filled the various posts of housekeeper, nursery-governess, and sempstress, and laid herself out more eagerly and gladly than perhaps any woman ever did, to be "generally useful". She made all the clothes the children wore; she did all the ironing most exquisitely (no light task in the days when gentlemen wore frilled shirts); she baked all the loaf-bread used in the house, and did the cooking when company came to dinner; she ruled the servants with a rod of iron, spoke out freely to everyone, taught the children to read and write and sew, and from morning to night strove, without one thought of self, to promote the welfare and comfort of the family she served.

There was an equally devoted nurse in the same household, who remained there for nineteen years, and who, being very diminutive, was known by the appellation of "Little Mary". Between her and "Rossie" a tremendous jealousy and antagonism subsisted, but as Mary's temper was naturally sweet and gentle, she was always the first to yield. Little Mary had dark

hair, and large, soft, melting black eyes. Her voice, which could speak only the Gaelic tongue, was singularly sweet and low, and when she murmured "M'eudal bhoichd," it fell like music on the ear. Until her dying day she never learned to speak a word of English, or wore a bonnet on her head. Her indoor attire always included a snow-white cap with large frills, and a little tartan shawl; and she liked to take off her carpet shoes and move noiselessly about the house in what the servants called her "stocking-heads".

The one absorbing passion of Little Mary's life was love for the children she had nursed; and though her visits were always hailed with rapture by the children of the succeeding generation (who sat at her knee and listened with delight to her Gaelic songs and Gaelic stories, translated to them by a bystander), she never would acknowledge, tenderly as she petted them, that they could in any way equal her own nurslings.

Rossie's visits also were hailed with joy, although she displayed none of Mary's patience or tenderness; on the contrary, she considered that reproof had always a more salutary effect than praise. "I never liked *you*, Miss — never, never, never!" she would emphatically declare to one of her former pupils; and then, perceiving a smile gathering on the face of one who belonged to a later generation, she would exclaim still more excitedly, "And I'll

never like *you*—you spoilt child—never, never, never!” If anyone else, however, had ventured to make a disparaging remark on any member of any of the families she had served, Rossie would have flown into a towering passion and made a valiant defence, for to the absent she was true as steel.

In person she was very small, with sandy hair, freckled complexion, and keen, intelligent light-blue eyes. She never went out without a long black-lace veil down to her waist—a veil being in those days a badge worn only by those who considered they had some claim to gentility—and it, like the “Miss” before her name, she considered a mark of her great superiority to the servants under her iron rule. In winter she wore a tartan gown, tartan shawl and long boa, but on state occasions she liked to appear in a black silk dress and “filled plaid”. After leaving service she never adopted any new fashion regarding dress, but went on year after year wearing the same antique shape of bonnet, always surmounted by the long black veil.

When Rossie paid her last visit to the children of her first employer, she was haunted by a presentiment that she should never see them again. “This is my last visit, my dears,” she said mournfully; “I’ll never see you again—never, never, never!” And her favourite exclamation, with which she had terminated so many a sentence, proved true in this

instance, for poor old Rossie died soon afterwards.

In Inverness, thirty or forty years ago, the usual wages for a good housemaid averaged from thirty shillings to two pounds in the half-year, and for a good plain cook, from two pounds to three pounds. A dress-maker received tenpence a day if she went out to work at any private house, and charged from three to four shillings for making a dress at her own home.

Hardly any of the townspeople in those days aspired to keep a carriage or men-servants. Even the doctors had to be content with very plain vehicles. When people wished to drive, they had to engage a "noddy" (of which the town could boast only two), for which the lowest price charged was half-a-crown, though the distance might be only the length of a street, as cab-stands and shilling cabs were then unknown. Private carriages rarely entered Inverness except on Sundays, when a long line of those belonging to the county families might be seen on Church Street, in front of the old High Church and of St. John's Chapel.

It was the custom then for the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council, to march in procession to the High Church every Sunday morning, and this was a sight which many juveniles looked forward to. In front, led by "Supple Sandy," came the town's officers, in scarlet coats, knee-breeches, and cocked hats, and

with halberds on their shoulders ; then the Provost, with the Magistrates on each side, and last of all, the Town Council. It was always a sign that one was in good time for church if this procession were in sight, for the sweet silvery bells never ceased to ring until all these town dignitaries had seated themselves in the front gallery of the old High Church, which was in those days filled to overflowing with a congregation fitted to appreciate and enjoy the learned sermons of Doctor Macdonald.

There was another custom which gave the Inverness juveniles anything but pleasure, that of the watchmen calling each hour throughout the night. Many a child started in terror from its slumbers, wakened by the mournful, sepulchral voice of the watchman calling "Past three!" or "Past four!"; and fancied that some ghost must be passing along the street. There are some middle-aged men and women who have a vivid remembrance of the horror with which in their childhood they used to draw the bed-clothes over their heads, to try to shut out the sound of that ghostly wailing voice, which, to children of an imaginative, nervous temperament, conjured up all kinds of appalling visions.

We have alluded to Ord's Circus as being an occasional source of dissipation in Inverness, but there was another yearly dissipation very long ago—the horse races at the Longman. Many an open

carriage, filled with gaily-attired ladies, accompanied by gentlemen on horseback, might be seen driving along Rose Street then ; and many a picnic basket was stocked and sent down after them, as the carriages might have to wait at the Longman for some time.

After these races were given up, the Northern Meeting Games were for some time held at the Longman, but they were afterwards removed to the Academy Park. There was no Ladies' Institution then in connection with the Academy. The boys and girls all met together in their classes, and the Park was not broken up and divided, but was extensive, and capable of accommodating a large assemblage. The crowds of ladies and gentlemen that poured in and out of the gates had this distinction from those who now frequent the new grounds in Ardross Street, that they were mostly composed of people born and bred in the Highlands, with whose faces the Inverness people had long been familiar.

Until within the last thirty years, the Northern Meeting Balls were exclusive in the extreme, and only one or two families among the townspeople were privileged to attend them. No amount of money—or even of landed property, if only recently acquired and not united to good birth—availed to obtain for the possessor an entrance within the charmed circle. Seventy or eighty years ago these

balls were of so social a nature—composed entirely of Highland lairds and their families, who were all related to one another—that they resembled private evening parties more than public assemblies. There were little tables provided for some of the ladies, who were selected by the leading gentlemen and conducted to those places of honour in order to pour out the tea and coffee, which duty they used to perform clad in neat little silk aprons.

In those days when anyone who could not claim descent from or near relationship with some of the old county families could only with extreme difficulty obtain access to the Meeting balls, that same Northern proprietor, whose adventures in the way of being locked up in the Black Hole and of knocking down a man on the bridge we have already related, espied at one of the balls an Inverness gentleman standing near the counter in the refreshment room, and—not recognising him—ordered him to procure some brandy and soda water for him. The gentleman drew himself up, and replied stiffly, “I am not a waiter,” upon which the laird (who had been drinking heavily), replied insolently, “You are d——d like one then”. Later on he managed slyly to introduce a bottle of soda water into the pocket of the Inverness gentleman’s coat-tail. The bottle exploded and left a stream of water as the victim moved along. The trick was brought home to the laird and a great row ensued.

Gentlemen had to interfere, and at one time there were fears that a duel might occur, but at last the fierce and fiery laird was brought to reason, and made a humble apology either in person or by writing, and the matter was hushed up.

Another (much younger) Highland laird (whose estates lay in the same county with those of the one just mentioned, and who was equally wild, though not so passionate), joined with a number of other young fellows, at one of the Northern Meeting balls, in seizing hold of a young man whose father had only recently bought an estate in the neighbourhood of Inverness. They forced him to sit in a coal scuttle, in which they carried him about, telling him that they intended drawing as many teeth out of his head as his father had drawn out of theirs ; until he was rescued by the son of an Inverness-shire laird, whose conduct redeemed the honour of the Highland proprietors from the slur which otherwise would have rested upon them.

The classes of Mr. Joseph Lowe—famous both as a teacher of dancing and a fisher of salmon in the Ness—always wound up in September with a ball, attended by his elder pupils and their relations and friends. There was also a forenoon “Juvenile Assembly,” but in those days it was called the “Public Practising,” and was intended as a sort of preparation for the approaching ball.

The Academy pupils also gave a ball every winter (generally at Christmas time), in the Academy Hall, which was well attended.

The lectures which in those days were given every fortnight in the Academy Hall, in connection with the Mechanics' Institution, were a source of great attraction, although not so much to the workmen, for whom they were intended, as to ladies and gentlemen. Many a lecture on literature, science, and art, did Doctor Carruthers, Mr. George Anderson, Sheriff Colquhoun, and other accomplished citizens give—citizens who have long since passed away! Those lectures were most enjoyable and instructive, and to those who remember attending them, are linked with the most pleasing associations.

Keith, the "janitor," a tall old soldier—the terror of unruly boys—used to stand at the hall door on those occasions, to look at the tickets of admission and conduct the ladies to their seats. When boys were kept in after school hours, for not having learnt their lessons correctly, and felt the pangs of hunger by five o'clock, they used to try to elude the surveillance of Keith, by letting down a long string with a penny attached to the end of it from one of the upper windows, as a signal to the passers by that a couple of rolls or "cookies" were wanted. Walter Sim, the town porter, was often on the look-out for one of those signals, and securely fastened the rolls

to the end of the string, where they often dangled for some time, the boys being afraid to draw them up while Keith was on the watch. Keith was also librarian in the old library in connection with the Mechanics' Institution, which was then situated on Bridge Street, and he used to chat familiarly with every one who came for books, and to give his candid opinion of all the Inverness people.

The quarterly ticket for the Library also procured admission to the fortnightly lectures in the Academy Hall, and cost only two shillings.

Thirty years ago, all the gentlemen in Inverness sent their sons to the Academy, and were perfectly satisfied with the education to be received there. At an earlier date, not only the sons, but the daughters of the neighbouring lairds were sent there, and in an old volume of the *Inverness Journal* the writer has read in the Academy Prize List the names of the sisters of many Highland lairds whose estates have long since passed into the hands of strangers.

Many of these young ladies used to ride into town every morning, from their ancestral homes, on Shetland ponies, and quite a row of ponies might sometimes be seen ranged in front of the Academy, in the afternoon, waiting to take their owners home.

Several men of note received their education at the Inverness Academy ; among others, Sir John Cowell, Master of Her Majesty's Household, and the late

Edward Strathearn Gordon, afterwards Lord Gordon of Drumearn, who was likewise born in Inverness.

There were also many teachers in the Academy who are worthy of remembrance. One of the most venerated and best beloved of those was Mr. Urquhart—afterwards the Rev. Doctor Urquhart—who, in 1816, succeeded Mr. Allardyce as English master in the Academy, and remained there for about six years, being succeeded by Mr. Cumming, who in turn was succeeded by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Urquhart was adored by all his pupils, both boys and girls, and the first day that he appeared in the Academy, after returning from his marriage trip, they all met him at the door, with loud cheers and congratulations, and many demonstrations of affection. For many years after leaving Inverness, he was the pastor of a church in Canada, and in that country he died. Very few of his old pupils now survive, but the writer has read many of his letters which testify to the affectionate regard and interest he continued to feel for some of them even after an interval of forty years. Judging from a photograph of him in the writer's possession (taken at Montreal), he must have been a man of a singularly winning and refined appearance. The mild and venerable face might have served as the portrait of the preacher in the *Deserted Village*.

The masters who taught together with Mr. Urquhart

in the Academy, under Mr. Adam, the Rector, were Mr. Carmichael, Mr. Wills, M. Villemer, and two gentlemen who each bore the name of John Clark, but one of whom had a *Reverend* before his name. The last-named taught arithmetic and writing, and his colleague, Mr. John Paterson Clark, M.A., taught drawing. These two gentlemen were designated by their pupils—in order to prevent confusion from the similarity of name—by the titles of "Black Clark" and "Red Clark," owing to the colour of their hair. Mr. John Paterson Clark, who rejoiced in the latter title, was an amiable and kindly little man, who afterwards acquired celebrity as dentist to the Prince Consort, wrote a book called *The Odontalgist* (which was published in 1854), and purchased the estate of Fingask (now known by the name of Clunes), in the Aird, from which, after only a short residence, he removed to spend the few remaining years of his life in London, where all his wealth had been acquired.

While Mr. Clark taught drawing in the Academy, his colleague, M. Villemer, taught French, Spanish, and Italian (the acquirement of the latter languages being as fashionable in those days as that of German is now). M. Villemer was a man of culture, and was the author of several books in the French language—among others, a poem called *Astronomie*, of which a second edition was printed in Edinburgh by R.

Wallace & Co. in 1824. Mr. Wills gave lessons in book-keeping, and Mr. Carmichael and the Rev. John Clark in Greek and Latin, while geography, mathematics, and natural philosophy were taught by Mr. Matthew Adam, the Rector.

Mr. Adam was the fifth rector in the Academy, and his term of office extended over the long period of 28 years. Several of his successors are kindly remembered still, such as Mr. David Gray, afterwards Professor in Marischal College and University, Aberdeen; Mr. Peter Wilson, previously Professor in Anderson's College, Glasgow; Mr. James Steel, who afterwards became a successful medical man; Mr. Robert Harper, a Cambridge graduate, one of the wranglers of 1850, who, together with his intimate friend, Mr. Hoppett, the courteous English master, formed a great acquisition at many a social gathering in Inverness; Mr. Peter Scott, who had previously been classical master in the Academy for many years, and with whom a number of boys used to board; and Mr. George Robertson, now head master of Warrender Park School, Edinburgh.

One of the rectors just enumerated—Mr. Steel—was considered to teach geography in a more masterly, enthusiastic, and attractive manner than it had ever been taught in Inverness before. His geographical class for young ladies was a very large one, and all of them, from the youngest to the oldest, were eager

pupils, and looked forward to the daily lesson as a great treat. During the earlier period of Mr. Steel's connection with the Academy, he taught mathematics to several girls, together with the boys, and there were two young ladies of powerful abilities who so distinguished themselves as mathematicians that either of them was considered to have a higher claim to the gold medal than any of the boys. It was Mr. Steel's wish that it should be bestowed on one of them, but there was an idea among the powers in authority that it should be awarded only to one of the sterner sex, and so, to the Rector's disappointment, the honour was not permitted to be the portion of either of the young ladies.

Before his connection with the Academy, Mr. Steel taught in Dr. Bell's Institution, together with Mr. Buchanan. The latter taught English, composition, and history, and was celebrated for the rapid progress which he caused his pupils to make in their studies. Several of the essays written by boys and girls in his class were considered to display such ability and knowledge, and such ease and grace of diction, that they were printed, and somewhat widely circulated. The writer read lately an *Analysis of the First Book of Milton's Paradise Lost*, which was written in 1843, by Robert Livingstone, one of the boys in Mr. Buchanan's class, and which was considered so good that it obtained the first prize. It was printed at the

Courier Office, together with a few of the weekly essays and daily exercises written by the pupils during the Session of 1843; all of which display considerable talent and reflect credit on the admirable teaching of Mr. Buchanan.

While in connection with Bell's Institution, Mr. Steel had a private class of grown-up ladies, to whom he gave lessons in physical geography. Several married ladies attended it, among others Mrs. Buchanan (his colleague's wife) and Mrs. Sheriff Colquhoun. Miss Martha Nicol (now Mrs. Dr. Holthouse), authoress of *Ismeer, or Smyrna and its British Hospitals in 1855*, also attended it for a time. The class was one rendered mutually interesting by the enthusiasm of the teacher and the earnestness, intelligence, and appreciation of the pupils. Mr. Steel and Mr. Buchanan lived together for some time at Stoneyfield House, in the neighbourhood of Inverness, and had boys boarded with them there. After leaving Inverness, Mr. Steel studied medicine, practised at Wishaw for some time, and died there a few years ago.

Mr. Falconer, writing and arithmetic master in the Academy (who resided at Island Bank, and used to drive from there in his little phaeton), will long be remembered in Inverness as having been the terror of careless and disobedient boys, to whom he freely administered severe floggings, although to studious

pupils he was particularly kind, never stinting praise and encouragement.

A Pole of the name of Proszkowski at one time taught languages in the Academy, and was such an eccentric character that he was the source of never-ending amusement to his pupils. Some of them, indeed, made game of him to his face, and his name came to be corrupted first into "Prince o' Whisky," and latterly into "Cask o' Whisky," by which they not only designated him when absent, but boldly saluted him when called up to repeat their lessons in school.

The Academy had once also a celebrated drawing master—the late Mr. John Guy Hamilton—celebrated not merely for his great talents as a painter, but on account of the peculiar disadvantages through which he persevered in his art. He was born without fingers or toes, and his pencil or brush had to be strapped to the stump which served him in place of a thumb. His paintings of scenes in the neighbourhood of Inverness were exquisite, and he specially excelled in delineating cloudy skies and lake or ocean scenery. As a teacher he could not be rivalled, and the drawings of his pupils bear evidence of having been directed by a master hand.

Mr. Hamilton was also a very intellectual man, with a great charm of manner, which made him a great favourite with his pupils. His wife, a talented

and admirable woman (a native of Greenock), did a great deal of good in Inverness, among all classes and among persons of all ages, but taking a special interest in the young. In her great efforts to elevate the tone of mind and the pursuits and aspirations of the young people of Inverness, not merely among the poorer, but among the upper and middle classes, and in the influence she obtained over them, Mrs. Hamilton was exceeded by only one lady, and that was her friend, Mrs. Sarah Fraser, the first wife of Captain David Fraser of Dunaincroy—a lady whose richly-gifted mind and powerful intellect were equalled by the charm of her manner and the loveliness of her character.

At a later date than Mr. Hamilton, Mr. James Glen was drawing master in the Academy, and also had a private class at his lodgings, on Church Street. He was devoted to his art, and his good nature and patience were proverbial. His pupils have erected a monument at Tomnahurich to the memory of this shy, gentle, and single-minded little man.

There was also an excellent boarding school for boys kept at Torbreck, near Inverness, by the Messrs. John, Walter, and Alexander Gair, the eldest of whom (John) was a man of great ability and an excellent teacher. Many boys were sent to Torbreck after leaving the Academy, and their Inverness friends who went to visit them there used to give glowing

accounts of the hearty reception they always received from the Messrs. Gair, and the capital Highland luncheons which never failed to be spread for every guest, however unexpected.

During the last thirty years, ladies' boarding schools have not flourished in Inverness, but previous to that time they got on well, even though they always had a rival in the Academy. Mrs. Mitchell's, Mrs. Gibson's, and Miss Carnaby's schools all proved successful, probably because they were not started on too expensive a scale, and also because there were fewer classes in Inverness in those days, and less rivalry and ambition among them, and because parents did not consider that the farther from home their children were sent the better their education must necessarily be.

The only ladies' school that did not succeed in the days before railways, was one started at Drakies House, for boarders alone, on a very expensive and exclusive scale, by a Miss Howard (the daughter of an English rector), a lady of great culture and refinement, and the authoress of several excellent and thoughtful books, among others *The Parent's High Commission* and *The Moon's Histories*.

Miss Howard was peculiarly well fitted to superintend the education of young girls, but she received only two or three boarders. She had, however, got the promise of more, but before they were able to

come the school had to be given up, on account of great expense being incurred through the conduct of an Italian Signora, a most singular-looking personage, whom Miss Howard had engaged as her assistant, having heard of her through a register office in London. The Signora, whose appearance and manners caused great amusement at the evening parties to which she was invited by Miss Howard's friends, behaved at last in so discreditable a manner that her expenses had to be paid back to Italy, and Miss Howard, afraid to venture on any more dealings with foreign teachers, gave up her school, and at first returned to her father's rectory, but afterwards settled at Richmond. Her departure proved a great loss to Inverness, for her high-bred manners and cultivated mind had made her a great acquisition to the society there.

Another English lady, Miss Wapshott, of whom a sketch is given in another chapter, had a private class for French and drawing, in her lodgings, on Church Street.

The celebrated singer, Mrs. Birch, occasionally came north, and gave lessons to the young ladies of Inverness, teaching them how to sing, in the most attractive manner, the songs of their native land.

The name of Mr. Charles Morine was long associated with Inverness as a teacher of music, in a brilliant and showy style. He was the most fear-

inspiring teacher the town ever possessed, for he used to rap the knuckles of his grown-up lady pupils with his pencil whenever they played a wrong note.

There was, however, another music master in Inverness for very many years, to whose memory the writer, who was his pupil at the age of seven, is glad to pay a slight but heartfelt tribute. There never was a teacher more respected and beloved than old Mr. Thomson. He was a perfect gentleman, and his snow-white hair, his refined face, and venerable form can never be forgotten by his pupils. To the very youngest and smallest among them his manner was the personification of courtesy, and his patience never failed, even with the idlest and most stupid. How vividly the mention of his name recalls his low and courtly bow, his mild accents, his encouraging smile. He was a teacher who cared little for showy execution, but taught his pupils to play with taste and feeling; in fact, he used to say that he never enjoyed listening to the music of anyone who had not first learnt to *feel*. It was a favourite practice of his to place his watch on the back of any pupil's hand, to ensure its being kept in the right position, and though this always caused great trepidation, the watch was never known to fall.

In those days it was not thought unfashionable for the ladies of Inverness to play the music of their native land, and among those most famed for their

Highland music at that period was Miss Margaret Maciver, an elderly lady of gentle and retiring manners, whose pibrochs, reels, and exquisitely-played pathetic Gaelic airs caused her to be in great demand at evening parties. At these parties she appeared invariably clad in a black satin gown, a cap with white satin ribbons, black silk mittens, a reticule at her side, and a long Indian scarf of crimson and gold floating over her shoulders.

Highland music was at that time played by many ladies who had long since passed their sixtieth year, and performances on the harp were also much the fashion with both young and old. The exquisite harp-playing of several Inverness ladies at that period is still well remembered.

Very few young ladies received private lessons at their own homes, unless they had a resident governess. It was a very difficult matter to obtain the services of a daily governess, as thirty or forty years ago there were only one or two in the whole town who went out to teach. The position of a resident governess at that time, in the families of any of the leaders of fashion among the townspeople, or of the neighbouring lairds, was a very pleasant one. That hackneyed term, "one of the family," might then have been used with truth, for the governess was always applied to for counsel and sympathy in all family matters, and invited out to parties with the elder daughters of

the house. The tie between the employer and employed was then not merely one where both looked out for their own interest, but often one of generous friendship and tender consideration on the one side, and of life-long devotion on the other.

Church going was in those days confined much more than now-a-days to Sundays alone, both among Presbyterians and Episcopalians. In Mr. Fyvie's time there never were week-day services in St. John's, except during Lent, and when his successor, Mr. Mackay, introduced the custom of a lecture every Wednesday night, it was considered such a novelty that it was regularly attended by many Presbyterians. After the Disruption, weekly prayer meetings began to be held in some of the Free Churches, but there were no other meetings or gatherings in any of the churches throughout the week. Nor were evening services on Sundays the custom. They were held instead at two o'clock in the afternoon, thus allowing only an interval of an hour, so that most of the town families were in the habit of bringing home with them friends who resided at a little distance, for rest and refreshment "between sermons" before returning to church. For some time there was but one minister in Inverness that held an evening service on Sunday, the Rev. David Sutherland of the Free East Church.

The names of the old ministers of Inverness, such as "Parson Thomas," Doctor Rose, Mr. Clark, Mr.

Cook, have probably never been heard of by many of the rising generation, although those middle-aged men and women who remember having spoken in their childhood to Mr. Clark, cannot surely hear his name spoken without reminiscences being called up of his fine, benevolent countenance, and his kind voice, which never sounded so tender and winning as when speaking to children, though for persons of all ages and classes—but more particularly those who were poor or unfortunate—his sympathy and counsel were always ready.

Mr. Cook, who was the minister of the North Church before the Disruption, was a man of genuine piety and devoted zeal, and admirably suited to his congregation, but his sayings in the pulpit were often extraordinary. On one occasion he is reported to have said, "I wouldna' be a king, I wouldna' be a queen ; no, no, my freends, I would rather be a wo-rum, I would rather be a paddock ; for it's easier for a cow to climb a tree with her tail and hindlegs foremost, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven". Another time he said, "Many of you are thinking that you'll get into heaven hanging to the skirts of my coat, but I'll disappoint you and wear a spencer".

Mr. Cook was believed by the country people to have the gift of prophecy, and many anecdotes are still related by them of his prophetic gifts. Among

others they relate that once when arguing on religious matters with a man who spoke in a scoffing manner, the latter said, “Mr. Cook, we’ll see what I have said come true before the year is out”. Mr. Cook replied, “My friend, you’ll not be here to see the year go out,” and that proved true, for the man died shortly afterwards.

Many years have not elapsed since the death of Mr. Gair—commonly known as “Sandy Gair”—an equally worthy and old-fashioned minister, who belonged to the Church of Scotland all his days, and had a charge for some time in Glenmoriston. He was famed for his simplicity, homeliness, and kindness of heart, but certainly preaching was not his *forte*, and he was much less in his element when in the pulpit than when he had been assisting his brothers in teaching the boys at Torbreck School.

At a time when cholera was raging throughout the country, Mr. Gair was told that the more frightened he felt of the disease, the more likelihood there was of his taking it, and that he should try to fix his thoughts on something else. “Weel,” said he to a lady with whom he was taking tea, “I tried an’ tried to do that, but I couldna’ succeed ; so at last I took a big bodle pin, an’ I put the point of it as far doon into the palm of my hand as I could, an’ I kept twisting it roond an’ roond, deeper and deeper, till

at last the pain was so bad that it quite took my thochts off the cholera."

This worthy old man visited all the poor people in the district, regardless whether they were Church of Scotland, Free Church, or Roman Catholics, administering to them not only spiritual, but medical advice, so that none of them ever needed to go to the expense of calling in a doctor. He supplied the sick with medicines, and the hungry with food, and was also the banker of such among the cottars as had saved a little money, for they always thought it was more secure in his charge than in a bank. Pastor, banker, lawyer, doctor, and benefactor all in one, as he was to all the poor people for miles around, Mr. Gair's death was to them an irreparable calamity. His attached parishioners have erected a handsome monument to his memory in the beautiful little churchyard at Invermoriston.

Mr. Gair was a favourite not only with the poor, but among other classes, though his quaint ways and speeches often called forth a quiet laugh. His brother parsons always enjoyed a chat with him, and with the Roman Catholic priest in the same parish he was on the most cordial and friendly terms. He was always ready to put his hand to any work, and not only hoed his own potatoes in the field, but occasionally helped his neighbours with theirs. He was very fond of being asked out to tea—indeed often joined the tea

table of his parishioners without being invited—and on these occasions, before setting out, he generally soaked with oil the long black locks which straggled over his shoulders, thinking that by so doing he made himself more attractive in the eyes of the ladies, of whom, though he always remained a bachelor, he was a general admirer. Before taking his departure at night he used to narrate many an episode of bygone days over his one small tumbler of toddy, which he took only when in company, and always enjoyed, but never exceeded.

The quaint, homely race of ministers, whether of the type of Mr. Cook, or the distinctly different type of Mr. Gair, has nearly died out, like the old bankers, lawyers and doctors, the old shop-keepers and the old servants, and so have the manners and customs of "Old Inverness" died out, never to return again!

CHAPTER II.

THE BUILDINGS AND WALKS OF OLD INVERNESS, AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS.



HERE are many people to whom whatever is old is uninteresting, to whom old books and old furniture are mere rubbish, and who would consider a visit to an old castle or abbey a bore unless made the occasion of a pic-nic. There are others—few indeed in comparison with the former—who cling so closely to old associations that the severance from them causes a wound which never ceases to bleed, and who live so completely in the past that it alone seems a reality, and the present a dream from which they hope soon to awaken. Among these latter there are persons to whom the streets of Inverness are haunted by forms unseen by other eyes, and who, notwithstanding the extension and improvements of the town, think with regret of the old country walks once so rural and retired but now built over, and of the old buildings now pulled down to make way for modern ones, or turned to uses very different from those originally intended.

No part of the town is more completely changed than the Hill. Drummond, Barnhill, and the Kingsmills and Midmills roads have been completely metamorphosed. The Kingsmills road (if not the very oldest) is one of the oldest in the vicinity of Inverness (the hedges which still border part of it being probably of greater age than any others near the town); and until within a recent period it was one of the most retired. Not many years have elapsed since the only dwelling-houses between the entrance of the Midmills road and Milnfield (the residence of the Misses Macdonell) consisted of three thatched cottages (two of them much further from town than the other), which still exist. Abertarff's old dairy stood where Heathmount is now built, and from it a path called “Goosedubs” branched off between the fields in the direction of what is now called Annfield road, but what was then a very narrow pathway, from which no house could be seen on the lonely old Edinburgh road except the solitary farm-house of Lilyfield, tenanted by an old man, who went by the name of “Little Angus”. Goosedubs was bordered by wild roses and other lovely wild flowers, and formed as secluded and rural a spot for a saunter as could be found near Inverness. Southside Place is now built over the first half of it; and the other half, although still partly bordered by a ragged hedge, is shorn of its former rural beauty, and is a mass of mud and nettles.

The Kingsmills road is always associated in the writer's mind with an old man called "Staggering Angus"—or indeed often merely "Staggering"—from a paralytic affection of his whole body, who, in extreme old age, used to bask in the sunshine, seated on the steps of a primitive cottage (long since pulled down), which was situated at the top of Stephen's Brae, and separated from the road by a moss-grown wall. He always made a low obeisance and murmured some words of blessing, which the writer well remembers although at that time only four or five years old. Staggering Angus had maintained himself for years by doing errands in the town, and also by going round regularly to waken all the gentlemen who intended starting by the early coach. He was a great favourite with the Inverness gentlemen, but most particularly with the writer's grandfather, Mr. Peter Anderson. The latter, on the occasion of Angus's marriage ordered several carriages to convey the bridal party, and the wedding was such an unexpectedly grand turn-out, that it was considered quite an era in the annals of Inverness. Flags waved from several windows, and the old errand-man and his gorgeously attired wife were followed by a crowd as they drove in state through the streets, while many of the Inverness gentlemen stood on the pavement waving their hats, and crying "Three cheers for Angus! Good luck to Angus!"

Angus had ever been the meekest and most in-offensive of human beings, but his singular appearance so startled a stranger lady who was one day coming out of the Caledonian hotel that she shrieked aloud and attracted the attention of all the passers by. Poor Angus, in no wise offended, but grieved that he had been the cause of alarm, seized the lady's hand—not aware that by doing so, he added to her fright—exclaiming apologetically, “Don't be afraid, ‘M'eudal bhoichd,’ I was always this way, I was born like this”.

No Southside road or Muirfield road or any of those innumerable cross-roads by which the Hill is now intersected, had then been even contemplated, but it made a pleasant variety to come home from the Kingsmills road by Millburn, either by turning down the Perth road past Viewfield—so long the residence of Banker Sandy Mackenzie (Johnny Cope), and the scene of his supper-parties—or by the Midmills road which led past the then private and secluded grounds of the Crown to only three houses. These houses were Maryfield, the property and summer resort of Banker James Wilson; Midmills House, the residence of Mrs. and the Misses Macdonald (Ness Castle), and the old gentlemen, Captain Fyers, who was so long an inmate of their home; and Midmills Cottage, where Mrs. Colonel Mackay (the authoress of several earnest religious works in prose and verse, and daughter of Captain Mackay, Hedgefield), lived for many years.

The Millburn road was the liveliest of all in the neighbourhood, owing to the departure and arrival of the coaches, which have been already described, but except the old Millburn House (the property and residence of "Willie Welsh," the dining-room and drawing-room of which he is alleged to have used as granaries), there were no houses between the end of Petty Street and the picturesque, small cottage, a little beyond the entrance to the Diriebught road (where the tall commanding officer Captain Goldie, paymaster of the pensioners, lived), and another low-roofed cottage nearly at right angles with it, which was for a time the home of Mrs. Mactavish, Dunballoch. The "Hut of Health," where the Barracks now stand, was a favourite resort for young people.

Few of the houses on the Culduthel road were in existence then, and of these few most have changed their names. Viewmount (latterly the property of the late Mr. Charles Stewart), was built by a Mr. Anderson, who was agent for the Bank of Scotland before Mr. Mackenzie, and afterwards bought Gortuleg and went to reside there. The next occupant of Viewmount was the kind and friendly Doctor Munro, after whose death it became the home of the handsome and accomplished Sheriff Colquhoun. Woodcliffe was formerly called "Framfield," and was built by the late Provost Simpson. After he removed to Springfield it was for a long time the residence of

Mrs. Provost Grant and her daughter, Mrs. Macqueen. Clifton Lodge was built by Mr. Ross, who had lived for many years in Berbice, and was named by him "Berbice Cottage". A subsequent owner, who had resided in Dutch Guiana, changed the name to "Surinam Lodge". Broomhill was built by Mr. James Wilson, who resided there previous to his being appointed agent for the Commercial Bank. Thornhill (so lately sold by Mr. Black to Sheriff Shaw), was built by the writer's uncle, Mr. George Anderson, who named it "Blinkbonny," and resided there for a good many years. It was afterwards for some time the residence of Sheriff Thomson, who called it "Tighnagrein". Hill Park was formerly called "Parkhill," and was built by Mr. Macleod, who had long lived in the West Indies. Hedgefield was built and long occupied by Captain Mackay.

The only cross-road from the Culduthel road to the old Edinburgh road was one which led past one of the entrances to Roseheath (now called Hilton House), the property and residence of Dean Fyvie, the principal entrance being from the old Edinburgh road itself.

Drummond Wood was as retired a resort as "Goosedubs". It was reached by a dilapidated rustic bridge across the Aultnaskiah burn, and there was no path leading from that beyond the little wooden cottage which still stands there as it has done for very many

years. Another small cottage might then have been seen, a little further on, to the left hand, but no glimpse could be had of any other dwelling beyond the bridge, except of the old house of Drummond, which stood there in complete solitude and seclusion. Where so many pretty villas now rise on either hand, there was then only an open field. Oaklands, Merlewood, Drummond Park, and the many other handsome houses which now crown the terrace looking down on the Ness, were then undreamt of.

Along the Dores road, also, there were at that time no good-sized houses between Willowbank, where old Mrs. Glasfurd and her brother Mr. Robertson lived, and Island Bank, the residence of Mr. Falconer, writing master in the Academy; so that the walk to Ness Cottage (now known as Rossie Lodge)—undertaken so often by old Mrs. Fraser's friends in the summer evenings, to enjoy a cup of her fine tea (which for strength and flavour was never excelled), and play a game at backgammon with her—was then in reality a country walk. With the exception of the cottage at the Waterworks, there were only two small cottages between Willow Bank and Island Bank, and they were both situated at the cross-roads. The one on the left hand, a long thatched tenement, has only recently had to give place to a large mansion, but the other, a small wooden hut on the right hand, once used as a toll bar,

is remembered only by a few. It was inhabited by an old pensioner, who dearly loved a chat with the passers by, and always gladly afforded a shelter to any one during a shower of rain. Between Mr. Falconer's house and Ness Cottage there were no houses; and the only one to be seen on the terrace above, was a low thatched cottage called Campfield (from its being built on the site where the Black Watch was embodied and encamped), which has been so enlarged and beautified that it has quite lost its identity in what is now called "The Camp". Campfield was the summer resort of the late Doctor Nicol, who first started the Holme Mills, and who, when Provost of Inverness, planned and carried out many local improvements, and caused that pretty path to be made which runs alongside of the river from the end of Ness Bank to Bellfield, and to which he gave the name of "The Ladies' Walk". He was a remarkably clever physician, and was also a man of great energy and force of character. It was a great loss to the town when he was carried away by the cholera during its memorable visitation in 1849. He died at his residence in Murray Place, and was succeeded in his practice by the beloved and lamented Doctor Wilson, who had for a long time been his assistant.

On the opposite side of the Ness also, many changes have taken place. There were then no villas, great or small, near Tomnahurich, and no cemetery had

been dreamt of. The top of the hill was all covered with little hollows which were supposed to be the abodes of the fairies, and the children of Inverness often sat for an hour beside them, watching for the appearance of one of the little ladies in green, who, if caught in time, could be made to grant three wishes !

The road leading from the end of Tomnahurich Street to Millerton Bridge, had no house on either side, and was very lonely, except in time of frost, when bands of skaters might have been seen hastening to Loch-na-Sannis, which was a great resort in winter for young people.

Dunachton House was then called "Ballifeary," and was the residence of Mr. Patrick Grant, W.S., Sheriff-clerk. What is *now* called Ballifeary was then called "Eileanach," and was the abode of Doctor Mackenzie; and Springfield—so long the residence of the late Provost Simpson—was formerly the home, first of Mrs. Macdonald, and afterwards of her son-in-law and daughter, Banker and Mrs. Thomson. Springfield had been built by Mrs. Macdonald herself, and as there were then very few villas in the neighbourhood of Inverness—the townspeople living mostly in the streets and the county people in the country—this pretty residence, surrounded by beautiful gardens, and fitted up inside with exquisite taste, was a source of universal admiration, and was considered unsur-

passed by any other abode in the vicinity of the town.

Ballifeary House—now called “Dunachton”—was built by Mr. Mactavish, who was married to one of the Miss Macdonells, Milnfield, and was the first agent that was ever in the Commercial Bank on Church Street. He afterwards sold Ballifeary to Mr. Patrick Grant, Sheriff-clerk.

There is a singular story connected with the death of Mr. Mactavish, which, at that time when superstition was rife in the Highlands, caused great excitement and awe.

Mr. Mactavish had been ill for some time with a pain in his tongue which ultimately was discovered to arise from cancer, and he arranged to go to London to have an operation performed, accompanied by a nephew who was a barrister in the metropolis, but had been on a visit to Inverness. A journey to London was in those days a very serious undertaking, and the Banker went first to pay a farewell visit to his cousins at Migavie, in Stratherrick, accompanied by Mr. Sandy Mactavish, the Town-clerk, who was one of the Migavie family.

It was alleged that when anyone connected with the Mactavishes at Migavie was about to die, strange moaning sounds were always heard proceeding from trees in the vicinity of the house, but the greatest peculiarity in the occurrence was that although the

cries were heard by everyone else most distinctly, the doomed person was never able to hear them at all. The country people declared that although this banshee was never to be seen, the rattling of its bones might often be heard, forming an accompaniment to its cries.

On the evening before the Banker and his nephew left Migavie, they were taking a walk in the neighbourhood, accompanied by the Town-clerk and various members of the family, when suddenly mournful and weird cries were heard, and some one exclaimed, "There is the banshee!"

Everyone heard the sounds except the Banker and his nephew, but though they strained their ears, they could hear nothing.

Next day they left for London, and after arriving, the Banker wrote to the Town-clerk, asking in joke, whether anything had come of the banshee's cries. Mr. Sandy Mactavish wrote to say that no one had died as yet, but this letter crossed on the way an intimation of the Banker's death, and soon afterwards news came that his nephew also had died.

The banshee was probably an owl, but the mystery of how the doomed persons were always unable to hear its warnings, has never been cleared up.

The three villas, Eileanach, Old Ballifeary, and Springfield have now got many rivals in all directions, the building of which no one anticipated then ;

and the Northern Infirmary, which stands in their immediate neighbourhood, has also been much improved since those days. Before the erection of the Lunatic Asylum, lunatics were confined in the wings on each side of the Infirmary, and their cries had often a saddening and disturbing effect on the passers-by. They might generally be seen at the windows, gazing wistfully and mournfully out on the road, and sometimes a few of the more harmless ones were permitted to wander about the grounds, and even to go outside the gates. There was one among them, named Arnott, who was particularly fond of accosting all the ladies who passed along the road, and making remarks to them on their dress and personal appearance.

“I fear you use lip-salve, ladies,” he would sometimes say, “but such things are expensive, and do not improve beauty ; there is nothing like beauty unadorned.”

It became quite the custom for many ladies who passed the Infirmary during their daily walk, to stop to have a chat with Arnott, although there were some who could never overcome their terror of him, and always turned back when he appeared in sight.

There have been many changes since those days on the road between the Infirmary and the Suspension Bridge. No Cathedral, no Bishop's Palace, no Collegiate School, no Ardross Terrace had arisen then

even in the wildest dreams of the imagination. Beyond Ness House (long since levelled to the ground), the residence of Banker John Mackenzie, there stood—where now Ardross Terrace stands—the humble houses ranged round "the Little Green". The houses were almost entirely inhabited by washerwomen, who spread out the clothes they washed on the Green, which was not separated from the road by even a paling, and presented a snow-white appearance—it was so closely covered with linen from end to end. Ladies in town often sent their servants with clothes, which had been washed at home, to get them bleached on the Green, and paid one of the washerwomen twopence a night to sit up and watch them. The women took it in turn, to perform this office, and the watcher sat all night at an attic window.

At the end of the Little Green might have been seen for many years, from morning to night, a primitive kind of vehicle on which was seated the form of an old man, named Suter, who had at one time been a house painter, but had lost the use of his limbs. His wife wheeled him there every morning and returned for him every evening; and there he sat patiently all day long, asking for nothing, but appealing by his helplessness to the pity of the passers by, among whom there were many who stopped to have a friendly chat with the old man, or drop a sixpence into his hand.

Before the Suspension Bridge was made, the Ness was spanned by a handsome structure of seven ribbed arches called the "Stone Bridge," to distinguish it from the wooden bridge above the old harbour. There was a vault in the stone bridge, which was at one time used as a prison, and of which an interesting account is given in the *Reminiscences of a Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian*—old John Maclean—published in 1842. There is a story that a prisoner was devoured by rats in this vault early in the last century, but the nonagenarian does not seem to give much credit to it. This nonagenarian also relates that "Previously to the erection of the present stone bridge, there existed one of oak, which stood a little below it, and which was used until the following accident occurred :—An old wife was passing over the bridge, which was protected with railings, one wintry night with a load of heather on her back, when a blast sweeping down the glen took effect upon the heather and hurled the poor creature into the flood, in which she perished. On account of this the bridge was condemned ; and in 1685 the present stone bridge of seven arches was erected, partly at the expense of the town, and partly at the expense of M'Leod of M'Leod, the Hon. Lord Lovat, Forbes of Culloden, and Inshes. Some of the stone employed was from a demolished fort, which was erected by Oliver Cromwell when his troops were stationed in Inverness. On

account of M'Leod of M'Leod and the other lairds contributing very largely to the expense of erecting the bridge, their clans were exempted for ever from payment of the toll, which was established to defray the expense incurred by the town. Some years after, Lord Lovat sold his privilege to the burgh, and his tenants had consequently to pay. The toll was a *bodle*, or the sixth part of a penny, and it is on record that a short time previously to the era of 1745-6, it was a common sight to see a poor *woman* wading across the river with one of "the lords of creation" on her back in order for him to escape the toll. Another expedient for relieving themselves of the tax was adopted by a number of persons residing in the country west of the river. On Sabbath forenoon, instead of paying the toll and going to the kirk, a numerous party assembled on the spot known as the bleaching green and played a game of cammack. The minister with the congregation on coming from worship, were grieved at so unusual and unseemly a sight ; and finding that the sheltly players alleged their inability or unwillingness to pay the toll as the cause of their absenting themselves from kirk, the town authorities were applied to, who very considerably ordered the toll ever after to be discontinued on the Sabbath."

The Stone Bridge was carried away in 1849 by a flood which was aggravated by certain defects in the

works of the Caledonian Canal. The fine old structure fell at exactly a quarter-past six, on the morning of Thursday, the 25th of January, 1849. Its lamps had continued to burn throughout the storm of wind and rain which had accompanied the roaring of the flood, but all at once the lights went out, and then, according to *The Great Floods in the North of Scotland in January, 1849* (Inverness : *Courier* Office), "a slight groaning sound was heard, the centre arch gave way, and in a minute afterwards the whole seven arches at once disappeared beneath the flood, leaving only a portion of the pier and parapet of the arch next Bridge Street, with the lamp attached". The last person who had crossed the stone bridge was a sailor, named Matthew Campbell, who had gained the gold medal for Classics in the Inverness Royal Academy in 1833. Up to the last moment he had been indefatigable in his exertions, going to and fro across the bridge to assist the poor people in the Green in removing, and he had barely reached the northern bank when the whole structure disappeared.

Hundreds had to turn out of their beds in the middle of the night, and the lower rooms in all the houses on each side of the Ness, even so far from it as the Haugh and Murray Place were filled with a great depth of water. Three aged ladies in Ness Bank (the Misses Fraser, Farraline) were removed from their house in

tubs ; many other ladies had to be conveyed through the water on the backs of men (of whom some never recovered from the effects of the cold received from wading to rescue the fair sex) ; and fish were seen swimming about in the parlours and kitchens of many dwellings in the Haugh, Ness Bank, and Douglas Row. It was a great surprise for many children in Inverness on coming down stairs in the morning to breakfast to find their dining-room filled with relations and friends from the river-side, whose servants also filled the kitchen. The people who had a shelter to go to were fortunate indeed ; but there were many who had no friends to take them in, and who not only lost all they possessed, but died from the effects of the exposure.

The Magistrates, however, made every provision in their power for the hundreds of the poorer classes who were rendered homeless that night. The kitchen of the Northern Meeting Rooms, the Town Hall, Bell's School, the Poor House, and the Gaelic Church, were all thrown open to them. Fires were lighted for them and straw provided for beds, while bread and beer were supplied for supper at the town's expense. By Dr. Nicol's advice the females were accommodated principally in the kitchen of the Northern Meeting Rooms, and the males in Bell's Institution.

The sight from the Castle Hill on the morning of the flood, with the fragments of the Bridge in the

foreground, and with twenty-three streets and lanes under water, was one never to be forgotten. Many of the old people thought that the end of the world had come.

Until the Suspension Bridge was erected, people were obliged to cross the Ness at first by a boat, for which the charge was one halfpenny, and afterwards by a temporary little wooden bridge adapted only for foot passengers.

In 1848 the present jail buildings were completed. Previous to that date the jail was in an old building on Bridge Street. A long passage with grated windows ran in front of the cells, and the prisoners were allowed, sometimes, to walk there and look out upon the street. Down below was the "Black Hole" where drunken disturbers of the peace were locked up. It was entered by an iron gate, next to where a tobacconist's shop now stands, and through the bars the imprisoned brawlers could be distinctly seen in the daytime, while their cries at night, when attacked by rats, disturbed the slumbers of the whole neighbourhood. The Police Office was situated a little lower down the street, where a bookseller's shop now stands.

In 1847 the old Town Hall, so recently pulled down, was visited by the late Prince Consort in order that he might receive the freedom of the burgh. The Exchange was crowded with spectators, amongst whom

the Prince walked slowly, bowing and smiling, so that every one obtained a good view of his features, while his gracious bearing won every heart. The Prince was then on a visit at Dochfour, and he attended one of the Northern Meeting Balls. This visit made 1847 a memorable year for Inverness.

The Exchange in front of the old Town Hall was the place where the hustings were erected at the time of the parliamentary elections. Great riots often took place at those times, and rotten eggs and oranges were freely pelted about, often hitting the candidates as they stood in front of the hustings making speeches to the assembled crowd. At the time when Sir (then Mr.) Alexander Matheson was opposed by Mr. Richard Hartley Kennedy of London, the demonstrations round the hustings were particularly boisterous, and it was quite unsafe to pass along High Street. All the windows opposite the Exchange were crowded with ladies and gentlemen watching the proceedings with keen interest.

Among the old buildings in Inverness, linked with historical associations, are the remnants of Cromwell's Fort, near the mouth and on the east side of the river, beside the harbour. The walk round the ramparts used to be a great favourite with the Invernessians at the time when they took daily constitutionals. Some of them went there regularly on some particular day in each week, and then went

across to the Powder House and round by Rose Street. Very long ago, close to the old Fort, there was a factory for making sacking and sails, belonging to a company of gentlemen in Inverness, and under the management of Major Alpin Grant, the writer's maternal great-grandfather, for whom it was named "The Alpin Factory"; while on the opposite side of the river a rival factory had been started by the writer's grandfather, Mr. Peter Anderson, solicitor. The two streets running at right angles to each other from the wooden bridge have been named Anderson Street and Grant Street after the two rival manufacturers.

Major Alpin had for his head clerk a namesake of Mr. Anderson's, from Aberdeenshire, who was rarely called by his own name of Peter Anderson, but went by the title of "Peter Kekee," probably from his having a stammer in his speech. A worthy old-fashioned little man he was, gentle and courteous, as well as faithful, shrewd and industrious; and when he ultimately left his first employer to fill the post of confidential clerk to his namesake across the river, the loss to Major Alpin was very great, and the sense of rivalry between the two gentlemen became deeper than ever.

Peter Kekee's daughter for many years taught the Infant School in the Observatory Buildings, which was inspected every Monday morning by a number

of old ladies, including Miss Munro (Munlochy); Miss Mackintosh and Miss Macbean (Tortola); and Miss Mackintosh of Dalmigavie.

Peter Kekee died in 1853, but the memory of the good and gentle little man is still green in the hearts of some who are descended from both his old employers.

His second employer, Mr. Anderson, built that comfortable and commodious house on Church Street (the back windows of which look out on the river), which was lately purchased by Mr. Logan, and resided there for many years, having his office under the same roof—a little flight of steps leading to it from the dining-room. In that dining-room the girls boarded at Mrs. Gibson's school assembled to take tea nearly every Saturday, and some of them who still survive can remember how the disappearance of the old gentleman in his knee-breeches, long stockings, and buckled shoes, up the steps leading into his office, after tea, was the signal for their tongues to become unloosed, and for the round games and merriment to commence.

This house was tenanted by three lawyers in succession, for Mr. Reach resided there after Mr. Anderson, and was succeeded by Mr. Colin Chisholm.

The old house at the shore is still in existence, where Major Alpin reared his large family, and always kept a corner at his fireside for worthy old

Mr. John Grant, the father of his first wife, who, although he had no grandchildren of his own, was fondly tended by the daughters of his son-in-law. Mr. Grant had been at one time minister of Glen-Urquhart, and usually went by the name of "Mr. John".

There are some very old buildings at the foot of Shore Street, which cannot be rivalled as to their appearance of antiquity by any other houses in Inverness. There is, in fact, no part of the town which seems to belong more to the remote past and to lead one's thoughts more to it than the Shore—a part which many people resident in Inverness have never visited at all, but which was once considered a most fashionable locality.

There may still be seen in Shore Street, nearly opposite the end of Portland Place, the house within a small courtyard where once lived an old lady named Miss Kirsty Fraser, famed for her tea-parties and for her fine voice, which was displayed to most advantage when singing "The Vale of Avoca" at the supper-table. No social gathering was considered complete at that time without Miss Kirsty, and no one's singing was more highly applauded.

A little further down the street, nearer the harbour, in a high old-fashioned house with a flight of steps leading up to the doorway, and situated in a courtyard opening into a little lane, lived long ago the four

Misses Fraser, Farraline, aunts of Mr. Fraser, Abersky, and also of Miss Grace, Miss Margaret, and Miss Kate, who afterwards came to reside at Ness Bank, and who, even in old age, were called the "*young* Miss Frasers," to distinguish them from the still older ones at Shore Street. The "*old* Miss Frasers" have been described to the writer as most charming ladies, hospitable, amiable, and kind, and always having a hearty welcome awaiting their friends. On the old-fashioned buffet in their drawing-room, two bottles of wine—port and sherry—and a large silver basket of rich shortbread awaited, every day, any visitor who might chance to call. In this drawing-room also were ranged four spinning-wheels, at which the four sisters, every day, sat and span.

The sisters were intensely attached to one another ; they could not live apart, night or day, and all slept in the same room. Miss Annie (who had once been very pretty) slept with Miss May, the eldest of all, while Miss Jacoba and Miss Jenny were always together.

Miss May was the first to die, and then many years elapsed before the next break occurred. One night Miss Jenny was awakened by hearing Miss Jacoba singing Psalms in a sweet, low voice. "Go to sleep Jenny, dear, and do not mind me," said the latter, "I am only singing my Maker's praises ; I feel as if I

must do so." So Miss Jenny went to sleep again, and by the morning Miss Jacoba was dead.

The Shore seems to have been a favourite place of residence for maiden ladies of the name of Fraser. Another family of sisters, the Misses Fraser, Fanellan (of whom it is said there were nine altogether), lived there for a long period, and the name of one of them is tragically associated with the Gunpowder Explosion which took place on the site of the Northern Meeting Rooms.

There are not many remaining now in the town of what once were the dwellings of the old leading citizens, and the few which do remain have gone through great transformations, and fill very different purposes from what they did originally.

The "Blue House" on Huntly Street—so named from its being one of the first slated houses in the town—was successively the abode of many county families, but is now turned into a lodging-house for the poor, who bleach their clothes on the space in front, which was once secluded from the public gaze by fine old trees and shrubs. An aged lady in Inverness has often narrated to the writer the delight with which, in her youth, she used to visit the Blue House, when it was the abode of a gentleman known as "Mr. Munro, Grenada" (from his having long lived in the West Indian island of that name), who had married a daughter of Provost Chisholm's, and had several

daughters. There were beautiful gardens and a delightful conservatory attached to the house, but the great delight of the young people, who sometimes went there on a Saturday from Mrs. Mitchell's School, was a room filled with foreign birds of brilliant plumage, having among them a parrot of such remarkable talking powers as had never been equalled by any parrot in Inverness. At a later date the Blue House was the residence of the mother and sister of Captain Fraser of Balnain.

Many of the other old dwelling-houses, famed for their hospitality in days gone by, have been turned into offices and shops, as it is now thought unfashionable to live in the town, and every one aspires to a villa in the suburbs.

It was certainly far pleasanter of old to live in the town than it is now ; there was little bustle, noise, or confusion in the streets, and as many of the houses were built within courtyards or closes, with only their gables to the streets, and with large gardens behind, with box-bordered walks, and plenty old, shady fruit trees, the occupants could obtain as much quiet and seclusion as if they were living in the country. Several houses of this description on both Church Street and Academy Street, were pulled down to make way for Union Street. In two of those thrown down on Church Street, on each side of a close, lived at one time Dr. Walker, and old " Miss Jeanie," aunt to The Mackin-

tosh. Two of those done away with on Academy Street, in a court with an arched entrance, are well remembered as having been the residences successively of many well-known citizens; among others General Mackenzie—better known as "Fighting Jack"—who afterwards removed to that house approached by a flight of steps, a little further up the street on the opposite side, which is now converted into the offices of the East Coast Railway Company. This house used to be known as "Mr. Edwards' house," because it was built by Mr. Edwards, who was at one time Sheriff-Substitute in Inverness; and the court near at hand is also named after him, "Edwards' Court".

In Mr. Edwards' house the old General resided till he died, and there, seated on the flight of steps leading to the door, might be seen every day his little dog, Garrachan, the terror of every urchin in the neighbourhood.

The Station Hotel is built on the site of two handsome and substantial houses, which were approached by flights of steps like that of Mr. Edwards, and were at one time the residences of Provost Grant and Provost Gilzean, although after the former went to reside at the Bught, he used his rooms in town only as offices, to which he drove every morning, from his country mansion.

At a later date, Mr. Prophet, solicitor, resided in

Provost Grant's house in Academy Street, and many people in Inverness remember the sensation which was caused when Mr. Prophet's house went on fire one morning at early dawn, and some members of the family had to be carried in blankets to a relative's house, which fortunately was close at hand.

There were several very neat old-fashioned cottages between Provost Grant's house and the Academy, which were pulled down to make way for the railway station.

Mr. Couper, solicitor, was the owner and occupant of the house on Academy Street where Mr. Strother now lives, and, if we are not mistaken, it was built by him. At a latter date it was occupied as the North of Scotland Bank, of which Mr. John Mactavish was agent, having for his partner, his brother-in-law, Mr. Sandy Mactavish, solicitor and town-clerk.

What reminiscences of genial companionship, of sly humour and sparkling wit, of mirthful, free-and-easy gatherings such as one never hears of now, are awakened by these names! What capital stories Mr. Sandy Mactavish told! What roars of laughter they elicited from those who sat around his hospitable board! He used to tell one story about three clerks of his, who all squinted frightfully. One day, a Major in the army, who lived not far from Inverness, and who also had a bad squint, came into the office and inquired of the head clerk, a grave and solemn in-

dividual, whether Mr. Mactavish was within. "Upon my veracity, I cannot depone," was the pompous reply, accompanied by a squint, which the Major imagined was in ridicule of his own, so he turned wrathfully to the second man, who also replied with a squint, and then in a fury, he accosted the third, who behaved in the same manner.

The Major considered that this was a climax beyond endurance, and he rushed into Mr. Mactavish's room, declaring that his three clerks had insulted him and deserved to be dismissed. Mr. Mactavish was completely mystified, and declared that they were all respectable men who were incapable of insulting any one, but at last the truth began to dawn on him, and he made haste to explain to his visitor that there had been no intention to annoy, and that his clerks were doubtless quite ignorant of what had been the cause of his taking offence.

After the death of Mr. John Mactavish in 1848, this branch of the North of Scotland Bank was altogether removed from Inverness, and the little stir and bustle which accompanied the goings in and out of the Bank having ceased, Academy Street now became quieter than ever—seldom enlivened by any sounds except when the boys and girls came pouring out of the Academy at four o'clock—so that living there seemed quite like living in the country. The opening of the Railway caused truly an immense change in what was

once the quietest and most secluded street in Inverness.

High Street also has undergone a good many changes. The old Town Hall to which we have already referred has become only a memory ; "Macdougall's" has got a handsome new frontage ; the Union Hotel, long presided over by Mr. Cockburn, has been transformed into the Highland Club ; and the shops of old Mr. Smith the bookseller, and Mr. Keith the watchmaker, have been pulled down to make way for the Young Men's Christian Association buildings.

There have not been quite so many changes on Church Street (the principal one being the great additions to the Caledonian Hotel), although any Invernessian who had been away for twenty years, would see it also greatly altered.

The National Bank was built by Provost John Mackintosh, father of the late Mr. Charles Mackintosh of Aberarder. In a recent *Courier* an allusion was made to a marvellous escape which Provost Mackintosh made after the battle of Culloden. It is thus narrated in the *Guide to Culloden Moor and Story of the Battle*, 1867.

"Being an infant of eighteen months old at the time of the Prince's stay in Inverness, he had been sent with his nurse to be out of the way, to a house somewhere in the neighbourhood of Culloden. A few days after the battle a party of dragoons had gone into the

house in the nurse's absence, and, finding the child in a cradle, they, after pillaging the house, placed the cradle with the infant in it on the fire. When found by the nurse, the embryo magistrate was a good deal scorched; and till his dying day he bore the marks on his arm.”

Provost Mackintosh was one of a company of gentlemen who owned the “Alpin Factory” at the Shore; and at the back of his house on Church street, he kept, on the site of what is now Mr. Rule's office, several cows, which every morning were sent under the charge of an old man, ironically named “Teàrlach Sùileach” (the sharp-sighted, knowing and cunning Charlie), to graze on the ramparts near the Factory, and every night were conveyed home again by him. This old man lived at the back of the Bank House so as to take care of the cows. An aged lady on Church Street well remembers seeing Charlie coming up the street—followed by the jeers of boys who used to shout his nickname after him—and then turning down the lane with the Provost's cows.

In later days, when Mr. Mackay was agent, the National Bank House was the scene of many a social gathering, enlivened not only by the wit of Sheriff Colquhoun, Doctor Nicol and Captain Finch, but by the magnificent voice of Banker Mackay himself, who sang Scotch songs to perfection—his rendering of “Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,” being specially famed.

The Commercial Bank was formerly a cabinet-maker's shop, while the rooms above were used as a private school, where many boys and girls used to go daily, at the early hour of seven in the morning, to get "coached" for the Academy, at which they had to appear by nine o'clock. Mr. Mactavish, the first agent for the Bank, was succeeded by Mr. Thomson, who resided there until he removed to Springfield, and the third agent was Mr. James Wilson, who also resided above the Bank except during the summer, which he always spent at Maryfield on the Midmills road.

The British Linen Company Bank also was at one time on Church Street, and the Bank of Scotland on Bank Street.

Church Street used to be a favourite neighbourhood for schools. A Mrs. Mitchell, the widow of an officer in the army, kept a ladies' boarding school very long ago in that house belonging to the late Mr. James Suter, wine merchant (author of the *Memorabilia of Inverness*, which appeared in the *Inverness Courier* from January 31st to February 28th, 1822), the lower part of which is now converted into Mr. Ross's wine-shop. It was admirably adapted for a school, as there are a number of small apartments opening from the large ones, which served as bedrooms for the boarders. Little flights of steps ascend or descend to these tiny rooms ; and the whole house is full of

quaint little nooks and corners, which invest it with a charm for anyone who is interested in whatever is connected with the past. The principal schoolroom was a large attic, and there, seated at the head of a table round which the girls were ranged working at their samplers, Mrs. Mitchell, in order to combine recreation for them with lessons in elocution, used to read aloud to them from the popular novels of the day. Many a time has an aged lady (who came to spend her latter days in that very house where she had once attended school) recounted to the writer the thrilling delight and interest with which she used to listen to the reading aloud of *The Children of the Abbey*.

In those days the house always went by the name of "Lady Kyllachy's House," as it had once been the residence of a Mrs. Mackintosh of Kyllachy, and by that name it continued to be known for many a year, although it had been occupied by many other families of good position.

The house on the opposite side of the close is not so old. It was built by Mr. James Suter's father, who had been a wine merchant like himself, and it had only just been completed when the gunpowder explosion occurred in the buildings on the site of the Northern Meeting Rooms, in consequence of which every pane of glass in Mr. Suter's new house was shattered into atoms. The powder had actually been

kept above a tallow manufactory, and the tallow chandler, while enjoying a glass with a friend, had allowed his kettle of tallow to boil over into the fire, and the flame, reaching the ceiling, caused the explosion. There were several people killed. Among them was a young lady (Miss Fraser, Fanellan), who had started for a walk with her sister ; but the latter having accidentally splashed some water out of a pool on the street over her open-work cotton stockings and sandalled prunella slippers, turned back to change them, and thus her life was saved. Her sister was found with a copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress* in her hand.

Mrs. Gibson, an accomplished widow, kept a school at a later date than Mrs. Mitchell, above the shop latterly occupied for so many years by Mr. Morel ; and a number of young ladies, the daughters of landed proprietors, were boarded with her. Her sons distinguished themselves in India, but they are long since dead. Their names may be read in the old prize lists of the Inverness Academy.

At a still more recent date, the Misses Carnaby kept a good boarding and day school in the old house on Church Street, where the late Dalmigavie was born and where he also died, but which was rented from him during the period when he and Miss Johanna resided at Seabank.

There are two buildings on Church Street, however,

of much greater age—Dunbar's Hospital and the house immediately below, the shop of Mr. Kenneth Fraser, baker. The latter has the date 1700, the letters I.D., and the devices of a thistle and a star inscribed above the windows. Dunbar's Hospital has the Dunbar Arms and the date 1676 above the doorway, and several texts are inscribed above the upper windows. Above one of the texts is the date 1668. This curious old building has been used successively for many different purposes. In Cameron's *History and Description of the Town of Inverness* [1846], to which we have already alluded, it is spoken of as the "Old Academy"—by which name it continued to be designated for many years after it had been put to other uses—and is thus described: "An ancient-looking house, said to have been built of the materials of Cromwell's Fort, with a large garden behind. It was bequeathed to the community as an hospital by Provost Alexander Dunbar in 1668, but was afterwards used as a grammar school till the opening of the Royal Academy in 1792, when its funds were paid over to that institution, and now continues to be amalgamated with it in the form of an annual grant from the town. The building was then divided to serve as a parish library, female school, female work society rooms, &c., the ground floor being occupied by the fire-engines of the town. During the time the cholera raged in Inver-

ness, part of it again served the purpose of an hospital."

It was afterwards converted into a poorhouse, and continued to be used as such until the present building was erected in 1860. The writer remembers having frequently seen the old paupers seated at the grated windows looking out into School Lane, having their monotonous lives cheered by a peep at the passers by.

Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh, M.P., in his interesting *Antiquarian Notes*, alludes to both the old houses which we have last described, in the list that he gives of curious inscriptions; and there are excellent engravings given in his *Invernessiana* of Dunbar's Hospital and another old house on Church Street, which is situated in Abertarff's Close, below the Commercial Bank, and is well worthy of a visit. The latter is the last remaining of those of which there were once a good many in Inverness (one of them in the Castle Wynd having been done away with only a few years since)—houses with a semi-cylindrical stone appendage projecting outwards, inside which a turnpike staircase conducts to the entrance on the first floor. This house, which is now divided into several dwelling places, with various entrances, belonged at one time to Mr. Suter, wine merchant (senior), who had purchased it from Mr. Warrand of Warrandfield. Colonel Archibald Fraser of Lovat (son of the famous Lord Lovat of the '45, and grandfather of the late Mr.

Fraser of Abertarff), who was generally spoken of as “Old Archie” or “Old Lovat”—the country people pronouncing his name “Lo-vat”—took a great fancy to buy it, as it had a large garden behind it with a flight of steps leading down to the river—a garden whose fine old apple trees used to prove an irresistible temptation to the young sons of Bishop Macfarlane, who lived on the site of the Commercial Bank. “Old Lovat” had always a great dread of a French invasion, and he fancied that in the event of the enemy coming to Inverness he could easily make his escape at the back entrance and get into a boat which would convey him to Beauly. He employed his factor, Mr. Lockhart Kinloch, to negotiate the transaction for him without mentioning his name in the matter at all; and Mr. Suter, imagining that Mr. Kinloch wanted the house for himself, and being anxious to oblige him, sold it to him for five or six hundred pounds, which made Lovat chuckle with delight and say, “The man must be a fool to sell it at that price,” as he had expected to pay a thousand. However, as he never slept in the house but one night afterwards, he may be presumed to have benefited but slightly by his bargain.

Old Lovat was remarkably whimsical and ready to take offence. Various amusing anecdotes regarding him are related in Munro’s *Recollections of Inverness by an Invernessian*, 1863; but there is

one characteristic story which has not hitherto appeared in print. On one occasion, having heard that one of the principal merchants in Inverness (whose house he generally made a resting-place when he had walked into town from his residence at the Crown) had remarked that he was a "queer fish," he sent for him, and after purposely keeping him waiting for two hours, at last made his appearance, and found the visitor trying to pass his time (which of course was precious to him, and which he chafed at losing) in walking round the dining-room and examining the pictures which hung upon the walls. Lovat, without making any apology for his prolonged absence, joined in the promenade, and pointed out the beauties of the various paintings. At last they stopped opposite a curious looking picture of a fish. "What do you think of that picture?" said Lovat. "Is it not a queer-looking fish?" "Very queer-looking indeed," said the unsuspecting merchant. "But you think Lovat a queerer fish still," said old Archie, suddenly altering his tones and shouting as loudly and angrily as he could, while his eyes blazed and his fist was shaken in his visitor's face. After this demonstration of wrath, he rapidly strode from the room, banging the door loudly after him, and from that day not only withdrew his custom entirely from the merchant's shop, but never exchanged words with him again.

Another building on Church Street, St. John's Church, has had a very varied history, and has gone through more vicissitudes than almost any of the churches in Inverness ; for, notwithstanding the many changes which have occurred in Inverness during the last thirty-five years, there have been comparatively few in connection with many of the churches. For very many years Doctor Macdonald has been the minister of the High Church, and Doctor Mackay of the Free North ; and it seems but a short time since the long ministry ceased of Doctor Scott in the United Presbyterian Church, of Mr. Macgregor in the West Church, and of Mr. Sutherland in the Free East. Although there have been more changes in the Free High Church, still, there have been only three clergymen settled there since the time of Mr. Thorburn ; and for a very long time indeed Mr. Dawson has been priest in the Roman Catholic Chapel.

The numerous changes of St. John's Episcopal Church, however, have been such as to entitle it to a longer and more sensational history that can be given in these pages. Since the time when Dean Fyvie was obliged to resign from ill health, there have been eight regular incumbents in St. John's—not to speak of various clergymen who were engaged at different times to preach for a year or six months, during a vacancy of the incumbency. There has also

been a more complete change in the congregation than has been the case in any other church in Inverness, since the time of the Disruption.

When Dean Fyvie resigned in 1848, two clergymen were invited to preach on trial, in St. John's, for some length of time. One of them was a Mr. Smith, and the other was Mr. James Mackay, a native of Inverness. The latter had come over from America (where he had a charge in Connecticut) to pay a short visit to his native land. His preaching and manners gave such general satisfaction that he was appointed incumbent, and (having returned to America for his wife and children) he soon settled down in his native town among relations and old friends.

The days of Mr. Fyvie and Mr. Mackay were the palmy days of St. John's Church. No Cathedral had then been even dreamt of, and the "English Chapel"—as St. John's was then called—was crowded to its doors ; and it was sometimes a difficult matter to get out after service, the aisles being so closely thronged with the people pouring through them. The congregation was, however, almost entirely composed of descendants of old Episcopalians who latterly had worshipped in the "old St. John's," a building opposite to the Gaelic Church at the foot of Church Street. The "old St. John's" was built about the year 1801, was surmounted by a cupola, and cost £1000. A remnant of one of its walls still exists.

The foundation-stone of the "new St. John's" was laid on the 31st March, 1837, by the Rev. Charles Fyvie, in presence of the Provost and Magistrates of the town, and the church was finished and opened in July, 1838, its building having cost about £2000. The architecture owed much to Mr. Fyvie's well-known fine taste. The roof is modelled on that of Henry the Seventh's Chapel in Westminster Abbey. In the eyes of the congregation who at that time worshipped within its walls, the beautiful, comfortable, and quiet little church, with its simplicity, and soft, subdued light, was considered perfect.

In Mr. Peter Anderson's *Guide to Inverness* it is stated that "The congregation of St. John's is the representative of one of old standing in Inverness, and which continued to preserve a nucleus of worshippers, after the manner of their fathers, throughout the period of proscription, in the last century, on account of the Jacobite leanings of the adherents to Episcopacy, whose hierarchy and clergy were non-jurors. The Invernessians generally were so ardently attached to Episcopacy at the period of the final establishment of the Presbyterian Church, that the first settlement, in 1691, required the presence of a regiment of the line sent north for the occasion." Even since the lines just quoted were penned in 1868, by one who was for many years secretary and treasurer of St. John's, and one of its most attached

supporters, the church has undergone many changes, but the minute history of all the events which have occurred in connection with St. John's and its various incumbents since the days of Mr. Fyvie would astonish most of the congregation who now worship within its walls, were it to be detailed to them, and would prove more entertaining than many a sensation novel!

In former days Presbyterians sometimes came to attend the service on Good Friday, Easter, or Christmas Day, but not on any other occasions, until Mr. Mackay began his Wednesday evening lectures, which proved particularly attractive to the public, although preceded by a most unpretentious and simple ritual.

At the present day the congregation of St. John's is composed, with very few exceptions, of strangers who have settled in the town within about the last dozen years, and of Invernessians whose parents or grandparents were Presbyterians. Of those who really sat within the walls of St. John's in the days of Mr. Fyvie, only about four sit within them now. Some have left Inverness, a few have become Presbyterians, many more have joined the Cathedral, but by far the greater part are dead.

Even the Cathedral itself is filled mostly with the children of Presbyterians, but on it we will not touch, as it is connected only with modern Inverness, and has no old associations.

In most of the Presbyterian churches in Inverness

nearly all the members of the congregation can feel that their parents worshipped there before them, if not in the same pew where they sit themselves, yet in some pew the sight of which recalls reminiscences of former days. But in St. John's who can now feel thus? Not only are the tenants of the old pews gone, but the old pews themselves (hallowed by many an old association) have been swept away—the side galleries have become a thing of the past! And if we remarked in a former chapter that among the leaders of fashion in Inverness there are very few that could tell who held the same place thirty years ago which they hold now, we may as safely affirm that among those who now fill the most prominent places in St. John's, there are, indeed, few that could tell who occupied the chief seats there, not only thirty, but even so recently as twenty years ago. And yet there are Invernessians scattered all over the globe who can vividly recall the days when the stately form of "Banker John," the acknowledged prince of Inverness society, stepped regularly every Sunday into the Ness House pew in the front gallery, accompanied by his wife and family; while in the adjoining pew, those two shrewd, straightforward ladies of the old school, Mrs. Fraser, Ness Cottage, and her daughter "Miss Eliza"—the widow and daughter of "old Stoneyfield"—might always be seen in their large tippets of Chinchilla fur, reaching far

below their waists, and the former with a large black satin reticule suspended at her side.

One of the two gallery pews immediately below the organ was occupied by the aristocratic-looking Sheriff Tytler of Aldourie, and the other by the venerable and accomplished Mr. James Baillie Fraser of Relig, the author of a number of books illustrative of Persian life and manners. The crimson rays from the stained-glass window gleamed on many a Christmas and Easter day on the long, silvery locks of the old Sheriff as they flowed over his drab overcoat, and on the pleasant face, white hair, and striped brown and yellow waistcoat of Relig as he sat by the side of his equally venerable-looking wife in her close satin bonnet and soft shawl. In the gallery also might be seen the kind faces of Doctor and Mrs. Munro, Viewmount, and the elegant forms and radiant eyes of their daughters, not far distant from the pew of their intimate friends "handsome Colquhoun" and his graceful wife. No gallery pew was ever empty in those days. Old Lady Saltoun, old Dunmaglass, Mr. Baillie of Leys, and Mr. White of Monar, all rented pews there for a long period, and so did the strong-minded Miss Campbell (tenant of Kilravock Castle), and Mr. John Dunbar (tenant of what is now called Holme-Rose), the latter of whom often drove to church with four horses and a postillion.

Down below, in a front pew facing the reading-

desk, might be seen the military figure and snow-white hair of old General Mackenzie, "Fighting Jack," seated beside his aged wife and sister-in-law, in their grey-satin poke bonnets and large frilled collars reaching to their shoulders, and with their eyes never raised from their prayer-books whoever might come in or go out, or however emphatically the General might grunt or knock the end of his heavy walking-stick on the floor when some particular part of the sermon met with his approval. In a side pew not far distant beamed the pleasant, homely face of old "Miss Jeanie" (aunt to The Mackintosh), and all around might be seen the families of Mr. Duff of Muirtown, Colonel Mackintosh of Farr, Mr. Fraser of Bunchrew, Colonel Houston of Castlehill, &c., and others who had less connection with Inverness, such as the Wardlaw Ramsays, the Luxfords, the Enderbys, and the Piries. Major (afterwards Colonel) Greenwood, who for so very long a period spent a great part of every year in Inverness, was a strong adherent of St. John's, and so was Captain Shervington, the recruiting officer, who was generally accompanied by his friend Captain Wragge. There were also many persons of marked individuality among the congregation, who are still well remembered in Inverness. Among them were the mysterious Captain Finch, wrapped in his tartan plaid; old Miss Wapshott, whose appearance and dress denoted her extreme

eccentricity ; and Mrs. Stalker Ross, who always used an Italian prayer-book in church, and who is alleged, after leaving Inverness, to have written a novel of which the scene was laid at Viewmount, and the heroine was Miss Eliza Munro—now Mrs. Colonel Shervington.

To enumerate and minutely describe all who filled the pews in the “English Chapel” in those days would fill too much space. Of Mrs. Fyvie a sketch is given in another chapter, but we must not omit to mention worthy Mr. and Mrs. Strachan (natives of Aberdeenshire), who for very many years performed all the offices in connection with St. John’s, which the present pew-opener has now singly to fulfil. Old “Johnny Strachan’s” name seems so linked with that of kind and courteous Mr. Fyvie, that we cannot think of the handsome and dignified Dean without his devoted retainer being recalled to the recollection. The worthy old man used always to assist the Dean to put on and off his surplice, and to accompany him up the pulpit stairs to close the door behind him. He was very venerable looking, with white hair, a gentle expression, and respectful manner. By trade he was a cabinetmaker, and he had a great talent for carving in wood. The lid of the font in St. John’s is a specimen of old Strachan’s carving, and it is most wonderful when we consider that it was the workmanship of a self-taught and aged man. The font itself, with its

finely-cut bunches of grapes, was the work of the late John Batchen, stonecutter.

Mrs. Strachan, who survived her husband until 1866, was a neat, slim little woman, active, energetic, shrewd, and with the true Aberdonian accent. She was always dressed in black—her clothes being generally supplied by a widow lady in the congregation—and her favourite Sunday garb was a very short black dress, a black woollen shawl, checked with white stripes, a deep linen collar reaching to her shoulders, and a black poke bonnet. Her little room was always exquisitely clean, and she was much gratified when any of the congregation paid her a visit. Several members of the congregation used to take great pleasure in packing a basket every Christmas Eve and Easter Eve with tea, sugar, and meat for Mr. and Mrs. Strachan. It was also the custom on every Christmas and Easter Day for each head of a family in St. John's to slip half-a-crown or five shillings into Mrs. Strachan's hand, and all the congregation used, on those days, to shake hands cordially with herself and her worthy husband. On the Sundays following the Northern Meeting week and the Wool Market week, so many strangers used to attend St. John's that they almost always gave Mrs. Strachan some money to coax her to procure good sittings for them, which will give one a better idea than anything else of how crowded St. John's was in those times. On these days Mrs.

Strachan often carried home with her a bag of half-crowns. She was thus enabled to save a little store of money, and at her death bequeathed the sum of £20 to St. John's Church. When the worthy old woman died, several of the vestrymen followed her as mourners to her last resting-place beside her husband, underneath a weeping willow in the graveyard which surrounds the old High Church.

There was another character in St. John's, who went by the name of "Amen," for his duties as a clerk seemed to consist almost entirely in pronouncing this word in as loud, lengthened and mournful tones as he could. This clerk, Macdonald, had a first-rate ear for music and a good voice, and for some time he held a singing class in town, which his low charges enabled many of the humbler classes to attend.

Mr. Morine was the organist in those days, and a splendid organist he was, though there was very little music in St. John's then, compared to what there is now.

In those days the clergyman preached in the black gown, instead of the surplice, and no hymns were ever used except Bishop Ken's morning hymn with which the service always commenced; his evening hymn, with which the afternoon service always ended; and the hymns commencing with "Hark, the Herald Angels sing," and "Jesus Christ is risen to-day," which were invariably sung at Christmas and Easter,

the former one to that beautiful old air which now is never heard. The psalms in metre, at the end of the prayer-book, were sung every Sunday instead of hymns ; and above the organ's strains might be heard the rich voice of Mr. John Hunter, one of a family renowned for talent and beauty.

There were no such things as Christmas or Easter decorations, and the Communion was held only on the first Sunday of each month, when there was a collection for the poor. There was no weekly offertory collected after the service, but there was a large plate at the door every Sunday, beside which the vestrymen kept guard by turns, as the congregation entered the church, and into which only the heads of families were expected to drop a piece of silver. This plate could be seen distinctly by those passing down to the other churches, and many a salutation was exchanged between passers-by and the vestrymen in charge.

One of the last of the old vestrymen to pass away (after attaining the great age of ninety-one) was worthy Mr. James Fraser (the tenant at one time of Parks of Inshes and afterwards of the united farms of Cradlehall and Drumrosaig), whose familiar figure and kind, shrewd face were seen beside the plate during many a long year ; who gave many a bow and wave of the hand to Presbyterian friends as they passed down to the High Church, and stopped many a fellow-vestryman for a chat as they passed him in the porch on their

way into the chapel. Many and many a tale could Mr. Fraser tell of "old St. John's" at the foot of Church Street, and of its old adherents, especially "old Stoneyfield," who could not endure to dine without company, and made an agreement with another staunch old Episcopalian (the writer's grandfather) that they should dine together alternately at each other's houses, for several days in each week—which custom was kept up as long as they lived.

Mr. Fyvie and Mr. Mackay, and their two successors, Mr. Mooney and Mr. Swinburne, were quite ready to baptize or marry in a private dwelling-house instead of in church, and there are some families who still cherish the old-fashioned china bowl which was used by gentle Mr. Fyvie when performing the baptisms in their households, and which was afterwards used for the younger members by Mr. Mackay. Mr. Fyvie had a room in his house at Roseheath set apart for the baptisms and marriages of persons in the humbler ranks of life. It was a frequent occurrence for parties of tinkers from the Black Isle to come to Roseheath requesting him to perform either of these ceremonies. In Mr. Mackay's time, however, the tinkers seemed to prefer the honour and glory of being married in church, and on these occasions Mr. Mackay has sometimes been obliged to leave the table of a friend with whom he was dining, and proceed to St. John's, accompanied by the children of his host,

who were always delighted at the prospect of being present at a tinker wedding.

At confirmations no veil or white dress was required, only a little cap, and often not even that, but simply the braided hair ; and the candidates (if they preferred it) were permitted to sit in their own pews, with their parents, until their turn to be led up to Bishop Low. Confirmation was not performed at so early an age as at present ; it very rarely took place before eighteen, and any Presbyterian who married a member of St. John's was permitted to communicate regularly without having been confirmed.

There was a class of children held around the railing of the communion table every Sunday, after the afternoon service, by Mr. Mackay all the time he was in St. John's, and by several of his successors. His immediate successor, the Rev. Peter Mooney, a venerable-looking and most amiable man, conducted a class of young people in their teens, every Wednesday at three o'clock, when he gave a short lecture from the pulpit and questioned them upon it.

There was also a very good library for both young and old in the vestry, the books in which belonged to Mr. Fyvie, and which his widow permitted to remain there after his death. When she died, they were sold by auction, along with her furniture.

Mr. Mackay was a great favourite with the Right Reverend David Low, LL.D., who had succeeded

Mrs. Fyvie's father, Bishop Macfarlane, as Bishop of Moray and Ross, and whose home was at one time in Inverness above a chemist's shop on the site of the present Bank of Scotland, but who latterly resided at the Priory of Pittenweem, near Anstruther, Fifeshire, together with Captain Walker, brother of Bishop Walker of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Bishop Low was incumbent of the chapel at Pittenweem for a long time, but latterly he appointed the Rev. Mr. Blatch to officiate for him.

Mr. Mackay was often the guest of Bishop Low, and the latter advised him to become a candidate for the See of Moray and Ross, in the event of his own failing health necessitating the appointment of a co-adjutor and successor. Mr. Mackay acted on this suggestion in 1851. He was opposed by only one other candidate—the present Primus, who was at that time the Rev. Mr. Eden, rector of Leigh, in Essex. The contest was a close and exciting one, and the election (which took place at Elgin) was immediately followed by the resignation of Bishop Low.

From that time the congregation of St. John's ceased to be a united one. Mr. Mackay's supporters remained with him, while those who had favoured Mr. Eden gradually withdrew, and formed a new congregation in the Mission Chapel, which is now converted into the *Advertiser* Office. The real decadence of St.

John's, however, may be said to have begun from the time when Mr. Mackay (now the Rev. Doctor Aberigh-Mackay) sailed for India in 1856.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHARACTERS OF OLD INVERNESS.



THESE were the days of strongly-marked individuality of character ; people did not then appear to be moulded after the same pattern as they are now, but had peculiar traits by which they could be distinguished among a multitude. There existed then (more especially in the North of Scotland) a race who, by a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity and an eccentricity of manner and dress, had gained the title of 'characters,' and yet who all differed more completely from one another than any two people in modern fashionable society appear to differ now.

Foremost among the 'characters' of Inverness were the Laird of Dalmigavie and his sister Miss Mackintosh, better known as "Mr. Eneas and Miss Johanna," and sometimes styled (though no one can tell why) "Ananias and Sapphira". It is but a short time since they both passed away in the old house on Church Street, but there are none among the rising generation who can remember the time when they both took a prominent place in Inverness society,

when Miss Johanna's morning calls were hailed with delight in many a drawing-room, and Mr. Eneas, by his flashes of wit and humour, enlivened many a dinner party.

Miss Johanna was a general favourite. She delighted in going out to dinner or tea, in paying calls, and in entertaining her friends at her own house. Her parties were most enjoyable, from their unconventionality and the good humour and mirth which the hostess always seemed to impart to her guests, although she was very particular as to the precedence which must be taken, often calling out to the servant, "Oh! you must not help Mr. So and So first—he is not the principal guest".

She always insisted on a number of tunes being played on the old piano, and a number of songs being sung, during which her own cheerful chatter rippled on without intermission, and the entertainment, whether it was a dinner or tea party, always wound up with a sumptuous supper, to which she most energetically pressed every one to do justice.

On one occasion she invited to one of her evening parties a young man who belonged to a very musical family—one of the sons in particular being noted for his performances on several different musical instruments. After tea, Miss Johanna announced to the assembled guests that they must now prepare for a great treat, as she was going to ask Mr.— to give

them "a tune on the piano". The young gentleman in question interposed that he was very sorry to disappoint her, but that, although his brother was an admirable musician, he himself could not play a single note. "Oh, goodness!" Miss Johanna instantly cried out in dismay, "I have asked the wrong one. It was not you that I wanted at all; it was your brother."

Of children Miss Johanna was particularly fond, and she used to load them with presents, and give special parties for their amusement, when they were permitted to ramble all over her house and examine the curiosities with which it was crowded.

To her lady friends she was most outspoken, letting them know if she considered their personal appearance unprepossessing, their manners affected, or their chances of matrimony few, but to her favourites among them she was often most generous, presenting them with such costly gifts as silk dresses, sable muffs, and gold brooches. If any Inverness young man called to bid her goodbye before going abroad, she liked to slip a five or ten pound note into his hand, or order a handsome plaid to be sent him from Macdougall's to serve as a wrap on his journey.

In the days when she could go about among her friends, a piece of local gossip—such as a marriage where there was any disparity of age or position—was to her ears as the music of the spheres, her favourite expression on hearing of it being "Goodness!"

(the emphasis always laid on the second syllable). But her greatest delight was in attending all the furniture sales, where she generally bought quantities of things for which she could have no possible use, and which were often complete rubbish. At these sales she was always attended by her little white curly dog Carlos ; and her ample form clad in rich trailing silks and velvets (carelessly and crookedly put on), and her beaming face beneath its gorgeous bonnet, were as familiar to the public who attended these places as the form and face of the auctioneer.

Miss Johanna was very fond of needlework, and often made articles for bazaars, as well as clothes for the poor, but she read nothing except her Bible and the local newspapers, until during the latter years of her life, when she devoted herself to a species of literature which she styled "Doctors' Books". The perusal of these caused her to imagine that she was afflicted with nearly all the complaints described therein, and to send for all the doctors in town by turns, in the hope that they could cure her, beginning again, as soon as they had all visited her, with the first one she had employed, till she had gone through the round as before. The parting gifts which, at this period of her existence, she bestowed on friends leaving Inverness, took the form of "Doctors' Books" instead of money or tartan plaids !

For many years before her death her unique parties

and cheery morning calls were given up, but as long as she could sit (wrapped in a dozen jackets and shawls) on the old sofa near the fireplace in the dining-room, she gave her old cordial good-humoured greeting to any one who called to see her, and insisted not only on a glass of wine and a piece of cake being taken, but on the wine being poured out by her own feeble shaking hand. Genial and hospitable, she tried to keep up all her old kindly customs, till her failing limbs could no longer support her down stairs, till old age and weakness clouded her brain and obliterated her memory, and she could no longer recognise or take pleasure in the visits of the children of her early friends.

Mr. Eneas survived his sister only a few weeks. Although of fully as sociable a nature as she was, in other things he was widely different, for he had a much greater depth of intellect, and was so well read in the literature of past ages, that he has been styled a "dungeon of learning". His delight was in antiquarian lore, and he was well versed in all the superstitions and traditions of the Highlands and in the histories of all the old Highland families. He was always particularly anxious to obtain fresh information regarding his favourite studies, and listened with as eager interest to anything which threw fresh light on some old custom or ceremony, as his sister did to some bit of local gossip.

While Miss Johanna delighted in handsome and costly clothing, Mr. Eneas forgot that there could be a necessity for ever renovating his wardrobe at all, and while she was generous and open-handed, he grudged laying out money for any purpose, even for buying sufficient food to nourish himself, and lived on the plainest possible fare. His feelings, however, were deeper than hers, and he had the most devoted attachment for several of his early friends and for all the localities connected with his boyhood. Although he had many acquaintances, he had selected very few friends, but to these he always remained faithful. Simple and homely in his tastes and habits, he shrank from all affectation and ostentation in others; genuine and straightforward himself, he was quick to detect inconsistency and insincerity; genial and enthusiastic, he was easily repelled by coldness and formality.

To see Dalmigavie at his best and in his element, was to see him at the dinner-table of some old school-fellow and friend whose society he loved, who had patience with all his peculiarities, and who treated him with an affectionate attention and consideration which was denied him by a later generation when all his old contemporaries were gone. It was a picture to see the old man when his host had introduced one of his favourite subjects. He used to bend forward with his hands stretched across the table, and with his strongly marked features lighted up and glowing with eager-

ness and enthusiasm ; and by the time he had finished his first tumbler (for these were the days when toddy drinking after dinner had not been exploded), he was ready to launch forth with rapidity into his old reminiscences, which, however long they might last, no one might interrupt with impunity.

No one ever delighted more intensely in dining out among congenial society than he did, particularly if it were in the country, where he might during the evening take a stroll through the fields, for he fully appreciated rural pleasures. He was passionately fond of Scotch music, in fact had no toleration for any other ; and as several of the ladies whom he used to meet out at dinner, played it with taste and skill, his delight in those social gatherings was greatly enhanced by listening to their performances. His favourite air was "The Mackintoshes' Lament," and he used to listen to it with the most profound attention, keeping time with hand and foot, and as soon as it was over, demanding pibrochs, reels, and strathspeys in quick succession. He was a great consumer of snuff at all times, but on occasions when he was absorbed in listening to some favourite pibroch or to some story of old times, he used to take particularly large quantities and allow it to drop all over his clothes and on the floor.

There was one peculiarity which gained more local celebrity for him than any other he possessed, and

that was his love for making proposals of marriage. There was hardly a lady of his acquaintance who had not at some period received one of his love-letters, for his proposals were always made in writing, and never by word of mouth—his manner to the female sex being generally drier and colder than to his own. So much, indeed, was this the case, that he often at a dinner party treated with a semblance of almost contemptuous indifference some lady to whom on the previous evening he had sent an epistle breathing the most despairing and ardent devotion. His handwriting was the most extraordinary and illegible ever beheld, and his letters were usually written on the inside of an envelope or on some torn piece of paper. Those containing proposals, instead of being posted, were generally slipped under the hall door, after he had hovered in the vicinity for some time, in order to muster sufficient courage to approach the house. The wording of those proposals was quite as peculiar as the handwriting. He wrote to one lady inquiring if either she or her sister were willing to accept him (his feelings towards them being alike), but hoping, in the event of their not being so, he might get a speedy reply, as he had another (whom he named) in view. Another lady, the evening before her marriage, found a letter under the door, telling her that “it was not yet too late to think of marrying him, and that an old friend was better than a stranger” ; while her mother,

a widow, received a note from him on another occasion containing merely the words, "Have pity on my loneliness, or I shall throw myself into an hotel". One young lady, who sometimes came to visit friends in Inverness, had inspired him with such admiration that he not only wrote frequent love-letters to her, but used to watch for her at the corner of the Suspension Bridge, and without having the courage to speak to her, used to follow her like a shadow everywhere she went, until at last she dreaded going out of doors. He sometimes used to write rambling epistles breathing Platonic admiration to various young married ladies, but widows were the favourite objects of his adoration.

Mr. Eneas never could be persuaded to have his portrait taken ; he had a great dislike to the idea of its being exhibited in public, particularly after having one day come suddenly upon a caricature of himself in his long blue cloak, in one of the booksellers' windows. This had been sketched by an artist who visited Inverness before the days of photographs, and the discovery rankled deeply in the old man's mind, for he was more sensitive than most people imagined.

During the last dozen years of his life, his evenings were generally spent in complete solitude, as his sister always retired very early to rest, and—all his old contemporaries having passed away—the new generation had either forgotten the old man's love for

social gatherings or imagined that his old reminiscences would be out of place at their formal and fashionable entertainments. And doubtless Mr. Eneas would have felt himself out of place there, and would have experienced a deeper desolation and loneliness than even at his own fireside, for he belonged to a past age when heartiness and humour were the characteristics of dinner parties, and when congenial friends met together, not for fashion's sake, but to enjoy one another's society. He would not have understood the manners and customs of modern society, he would have suffered martyrdom by listening to classical music, and he would have pined for the genial tones and familiar faces which used to make those old gatherings have such a charm for him. To the very last, however, he was delighted to meet an acquaintance on the street, and used, even there, to pour forth his old reminiscences at such length as to appal any one who was pressed for time. Who can forget his eager face, his peculiar gait, his hearty clasp of the hand? It even yet seems difficult to realise that never more will be seen on the streets of Inverness that remarkable figure, which, through all the varying phases of fashion, retained the same antique coat, huge black stock, high shirt collar, and long military cloak!

Mr. Eneas took his sister's death much to heart, although intellectually she had never been a com-

panion for him, and had, for the last few years of her existence, been quite dead to the world. In a very short time after she had passed away, he was laid to rest by her side in the Chapel yard.

Although he never ceased to grudge the procuring of necessary comforts for himself, he subscribed, during the last few years of his life, most liberally and heartily, to every scheme in connection with the Free High Church, of which he was a devoted adherent, and which he attended as long as his feeble limbs could support him there. When confined to bed by his last illness, he never omitted to send his contribution to the usual weekly church-door collection. When any one connected with his own church came to see him, he always took the opportunity to slip into his visitor's hand half-a-crown or five shillings wrapped in a piece of newspaper ; and to say, " Put this into the plate on Sunday for me".

Through all the course of his long life, he was never known to utter a remark which could cause pain, or to listen willingly to anything which was to the detriment of another. He never made an enemy, and had managed to secure the lasting attachment of a few true friends. Among those who laughed at his peculiarities, and even ridiculed the sensitive old man before his face, there were probably few who were able to appreciate his learning or the powers of his mind.

Mrs. Fyvie, wife of the Dean and daughter of a former Bishop of the Diocese, was another of the "characters" of Inverness, and was one of the kindest, most strong-minded, and most unconventional of women. Probably no member of the female sex was ever more indifferent to fashion and personal appearance than she was, and yet she must have been a fine-looking woman at the time when she was Miss Duff Macfarlane, and she retained, even to extreme old age, a lovely china-like complexion, which harmonised with her beautiful silver hair. In the days when she lived at Roseheath (now called Hilton House), it was a never-to-be-forgotten sight to see her sailing down Castle Street, with her petticoats trailing in the mud beyond her dress, and her variety of shawls streaming in all directions. As regarded cleanliness in her household, she was punctilious to a remarkable degree, but her carelessness and untidiness in dress were such that when a lady friend once ventured to suggest to her that it would be well to pay a little more attention to her outward appearance, she replied, "My dear, I thank the Lord that I remember to put on my clothes at all, for I am always afraid that I shall go out without any". On another occasion, when she was bargaining for fish in the market-place, after walking in heavy rain from Roseheath, a bystander took the liberty of drawing her attention to the fact that there was a great depth of mud on the skirt of

her dress, as well as several holes in her white cotton stockings, whereupon the Dean's wife, drawing herself up with regal dignity, exclaimed indignantly, "What does that signify? *I am Mrs. Fyvie!*" The use of a looking-glass was always disdained by Mrs. Fyvie, and on Sunday mornings when it was time to get ready for church, instead of arraying herself in her bedroom, she used to make a hasty toilet in the lobby, having first flung her mantle and boa down stairs, as a signal to the housemaid to lose no time in bringing her goloshes to her. These goloshes were cast aside when she got into church, and her feet encased in a pair of warm slippers, which always awaited her in her pew, where the finishing touches were generally given to the toilet, which had been but partially performed in the Roseheath lobby, and the stray locks gathered up under the large black silk bonnet.

Her husband, who was the mildest and most courteous of men, was both ruled and worshipped by her. She believed that his equal, for piety and learning, did not exist on earth, but she never permitted him to take the most trivial step without asking her consent. For some time before his resignation, his health was so bad that any mental exertion was almost impossible for him, but his wife, in her intense anxiety lest he should lose his church, helped him with his sermons (and it was even alleged often composed them entirely), and performed in his stead every

clerical duty that was possible for her. She would doubtless gladly have entered the pulpit and preached had she been permitted. In all the congregation of St. John's Church she took a deep and affectionate interest, regarding all those whom her husband had baptised as if they were her own children, to be scolded and kept in order, as well as petted and caressed. Both before and after the Dean's death, she went constantly among his flock, lecturing, cheering, counselling, sympathising, and making no distinctions, but showing an equal interest in rich and poor, young and old, fashionable and unfashionable. Even those who were most afraid of her reproofs could not cherish any resentment towards her, while those who really strove to do their duty were always gladdened by her genial warmth. There was no individual in St. John's, of whatever position in society, who did not look on Roseheath as a home where sympathy and advice awaited them, from their clergyman's wife, in any sorrow or perplexity.

No strangers ever appeared in St. John's on a Sunday, unobserved by Mrs. Fyvie, and she and the Dean always made a point of finding out where they were staying, and going to call for them on the Monday, in order to invite them to dinner at Roseheath. The hospitality and generosity of the Fyvies were, in fact, unbounded (although they had only a very limited income), and in no house was there ever

a warmer and heartier welcome awaiting every guest. Mrs. Fyvie used to give charming little evening parties to all the young friends of her stepchildren (of whom no mother could have been fonder or prouder), and no effort was spared on her part to make all the young people enjoy themselves. Many a pretty gift did she bestow, many an interesting book did she offer to lend.

No beggar was ever turned away from the gates of Roseheath, or applied, unheeded, to Mrs. Fyvie on the highway. Often, after vainly searching the huge pocket which hung by her side, for a penny, and finding no coin except a half-a-crown, she has parted with the latter rather than let any suppliant appeal to her in vain.

After her husband had resigned, and Mr. Mackay had been appointed Incumbent, Mrs. Fyvie imagined that she should still be considered the ruler of the church, and was very jealous of any infringement of her rights or slight to her dignity. There was a front gallery pew of which she desired to retain the sole possession, and having several times been annoyed by finding a family, who had only recently come to Inverness, seated there, and thus preventing her from getting to the place of honour at the top, she one day electrified the congregation by ordering the intruders, in a loud voice, to come out, as she alone had a right to that pew. It was only, however,

when she considered her rights invaded that she ever gave way to such a demonstration. Of any behaviour calculated to give pain she was quite incapable, for she possessed that kindness of heart and delicacy of feeling which always give birth to genuine politeness, and even a careless observer could not fail to perceive that, notwithstanding her extreme eccentricity, she was a perfect gentlewoman, and had always been accustomed to move in what was in *every* sense—and not merely a conventional one—the best society.

When the death of her favourite stepsons (far away in foreign lands, where she could not minister to their wants or soothe their last moments) followed the death of her idolised husband and the loss of the pretty home where she had so freely dispensed hospitality, Mrs. Fyvie became much broken down ; but still, even in the days when age and infirmities had impaired her faculties, and she lived alone and desolate in a small house at the foot of Academy Street, she loved to invite some half-dozen of her Episcopalian acquaintances to take tea with her ; and anything more unconventional than those gatherings could not be imagined, for the hostess generally utilised her guests and ordered them to help in toasting the bread and arranging the tea things on the table.

Mrs. Fyvie was particularly fond of a good dinner, and during the last years of her life, when failing

health prevented her from accepting any invitations, she used, on the morning of the day on which a dinner party was to be given at a friend's house, to send a servant to make inquiries as to the bill of fare. If any of the dishes met with her approval, she sent, at the dinner hour, a covered basket containing plates, which she demanded should be filled with only her favourite dainties. Once, when some boiled mutton (which she particularly disliked) was sent her, she indignantly returned it. On Christmas Day she always stipulated for a large supply of turkey and plum pudding being sent her, whatever else might be at table.

For years before her death she was extremely feeble, and used to be wheeled about the streets in a Bath chair by a number of little boys, who received pennies from her for doing so. Wrapped in an old scarlet Indian shawl, and with her silvery locks straggling from beneath her black silk bonnet, her figure was a conspicuous object on the Inverness streets ; but it had a saddening effect on those who had known her in her brighter days, when surrounded by troops of friends, to see her thus in her old age desolate and helpless, and with her once powerful masculine intellect, which had ruled and influenced so many, darkened and decayed.

Captain Finch was a gentleman who resided so many years in Inverness that he might almost have

been termed a native of the place, and who differed so much from the inhabitants in many respects, that he deserved to be ranked among its characters. He first came to the North as the guest of the Earl of Seafield (who had accidentally made his acquaintance), and this effected for him an entrance into the best circles in the Highland Capital. For years he was a frequent visitor at the houses of Banker Mackenzie, Banker Mackay, Doctor Nicol, Sheriff Colquhoun, Mr. Mackintosh of Aberarder, Mr. Duff of Muirtown, and many others. Their dinner-parties were never considered complete without him, and he became so completely identified with Inverness, so attached to the friends he had met there, and such an admirer of its scenery, that strangers were apt to imagine that it must have been the place of his birth. Although Captain Finch resided in Inverness for between twenty and thirty years, he was never known during all that time to move further away than Nairn, Strathpeffer, or Drumnadrochit. Who he really was, however, was a mystery which was never fully unravelled, even though the name of his reputed father is engraven below his own on the tombstone which marks his resting-place in Tomnahurich Cemetery. In the days when he used to perambulate the streets of Inverness young people were more romantic than they are now, and the mystery which hung around this stately and aristocratic-looking individual invested him in their

eyes with a strange fascination. Captain Finch was a gentleman of courtly and polished manners, and his courtesy to all women, whether old or young, rich or poor, was proverbial. He was of a tall and commanding figure, and had a handsome face lit up by a pair of splendid coal-black eyes, which could sometimes blaze with a lurid flame that denoted a fierce and passionate temper. He was hardly ever known to smile unless it were in sarcasm, and an habitual gloom and melancholy darkened his brow and subdued his tones. Yet he loved social pleasures, and as long as his old friends were left to him, delighted in partaking of their hospitality and in inviting them to dine at his own rooms. Even with them, however, he maintained his habitual reserve as to his identity and his past life; at anyrate, if he ever revealed his secret to any one of them, it never went further, and has now gone down to the grave.

That he lived here under a feigned name was believed by almost every one, but there were differences of opinion as to what his real history had been. Many believed that he had never been in the army at all, some hinted that he had been obliged to leave it on account of some crime, others fancied that his relatives had tried to shut him up in an asylum, so as to get hold of his money; but the greatest number of all believed that he was the son of one of the Royal Dukes, and a grandson of George the Third. That

he bore a most extraordinary resemblance to the portraits of George the Fourth could not be disputed, and one old gentleman who had seen the "First Gentleman in Europe" on several occasions, informed the writer that on first beholding Captain Finch he was perfectly startled by the resemblance between the two faces.

The Captain was never to be seen in either winter or summer without a tartan plaid wrapped round his shoulders and hanging down in folds to the ground. He generally wore trousers of shepherd tartan and had a variety of caps which he wore by turns, one in which crimson predominated being the favourite. He also was generally the wearer of a valuable scarf pin. Of these he possessed several—one of them being adorned with a large brilliant. He was always extremely neat and most carefully got up, quite the ideal of a dandy of the old school. His walk was particularly slow and dignified; the utmost stretch of imagination could not conjure up a vision of Captain Finch in a hurry. Three o'clock was the time when he might generally be seen taking his stately saunter along High Street, never looking to the right or to the left, and acknowledging the salutations of acquaintances with a low and ceremonious bow.

He had a great personal liking for the Rev. James Mackay, and a great admiration for his preaching,

and as long as that gentleman remained the incumbent of St. John's, he was one of his most regular and attentive hearers; but from the time when Mr. Mackay sailed for India, Captain Finch was never known to enter a place of worship.

The Captain's name was never seen on a subscription list, but it has been stated on the most reliable authority that he gave away fully one third of his income in private charity. No case of real distress was ever brought quietly before him that he did not gladly and speedily do his utmost to relieve.

To all those who were in a dependent position or had seen better days, he paid that extreme attention and respect which are generally awarded only to the wealthy or those in a superior sphere; and when visiting in any house he always strove to give the least possible trouble to servants, and when taking his departure loaded them with gifts.

For two years he resided at Drumnadrochit Hotel in Glen Urquhart, and during that time he made the acquaintance and gained the gratitude of many of his humble neighbours. On one occasion, while sauntering in front of the Inn smoking a cigar on a day of cold east wind, he observed an elderly country-woman, clad in a very thin shawl, passing along the road to Inverness in one of those old-fashioned little carts which were peculiar to the Highlands. He instantly took the plaid from his shoulders, and passing it round the poor

woman, begged her to accept of it to protect her from the cold.

Captain Finch lived for many years in lodgings, and always selected those where he could procure the best cooking, for he was a great epicure and lived on the most *recherché* fare. He was particularly fond of game when it was something more than "high," and once invited a gentleman to dine with him upon a woodcock which had been shot nine weeks before. Latterly he took up his permanent abode at the Muirtown Hotel. For many years before his death he gave up attending any of the parties where his stately form had once been so familiar a sight. Even before many of his old friends had died, he began to retire into seclusion; but as one by one they rapidly dropped away, he withdrew himself from the public more and more, until finally, upon the death of the last of his old associates, Banker John Mackay (whose house—famed for its sincere kindness and genial hospitality—had been the only one he had entered for years), he secluded himself entirely in his rooms at the Muirtown Hotel, refusing admittance to any visitor, mourning his last friend with a grief which would not be comforted, and sinking into a gloom and misanthropy which deepened and darkened until they ended in death.

Miss Isabella Gwynne was a native of Fort Augustus, but she so often paid lengthened visits to her friends

in Inverness, that she was considered quite an Invernessian. Her father, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, had commanded the government galley which used to carry provisions from Inverness for the use of the dwellers in the old Fort, and his marriage is alluded to in Mrs. Grant of Laggan's *Letters from the Mountains*. For many years Miss Gwynne lived with her brother Mark, the medical man of the district, who was a most singular being, uncouth, erratic, and abrupt, though with real cleverness and wit; but from the time when he departed to seek his fortunes in Australia, she resided alone, with one servant, in a romantic cottage on the banks of the Canal. With persons of all ranks Miss Gwynne was a great favourite. In the homes of the poor she was a constant visitor, nursing the sick, comforting the afflicted, feeding the hungry, and sympathising in every joy; so that notwithstanding a very slender income, she was able to do a much greater amount of good than many who were twenty times wealthier and in a much higher social sphere. She was also a frequent guest in the houses of the neighbouring proprietors and country gentlemen, who considered their dinner-tables enlivened and made more attractive by her mirth, good-humour, and flow of anecdotes. That homely figure in its old-fashioned tartan gown would now be considered sadly out of place at a fashionable dinner, but in those days any one who was a

“character” was eagerly sought after, in order to prevent formality, and promote the amusement of the guests.

Miss Gwynne—or “Gwynny” as she was often called—was the most guileless, unsuspecting and affectionate of human beings ; she believed that there was something worthy of love in every one, and to believe evil of anyone was torture to her. She was, however, capable, though rarely, of giving a rebuff if she considered that she had been made the subject of a liberty or slight. On one occasion, when a gentleman on coming to call for her and finding the passage leading to the parlour full of smoke, called out, “Why don’t you clean your chimneys, Miss Gwynne?” she shouted back from the top of the stairs, “Clean your heart, Mr. Colin, clean your heart ; it has more need of it”.

At another time a lady in the neighbourhood borrowed all Miss Gwynne’s chairs for an entertainment given on the occasion of her daughter’s wedding, but sent a message that she could not invite the lender, as she expected such a number of guests that she really should not have a seat to offer her ; whereupon Miss Gwynne naively remarked to a friend, “Hoot, toot, I *assure* you, she might have let me sit on one of my own chairs”.

This phrase, “Hoot, toot, I *assure* you,” was generally the preface to every remark she made, and she

often made it more emphatic by clutching hold of the shoulder or hands of her auditor.

Her servant Beenie, who had lived with her for a very long time, was as great a character as herself. Miss Gwynne was distressed at one time by perceiving that Beenie was particularly absent in manner and depressed, and on questioning her as to the reason, the damsel at once frankly confessed that she was "in love"; whereupon her mistress, in deepened anxiety and great excitement, seized hold of her hands, exclaiming—

"Hoot, toot, I *assure* you, Beenie, lassie, there's no such thing going as that kind of love; there's nothing but *brotherly* love, Beenie—nothing but *brotherly* love!" "That's all you know aboot it, Miss Gwynne," cried Beenie, and flounced out of the room.

With the late Roualeyn Gordon Cumming, during his lengthened residence in Fort - Augustus, Miss Gwynne was on the best of terms. They often used to call for each other, and Miss Gwynne used to present him with religious tracts, which, with his habitual courtesy, he never failed to accept; but once, on going to his rooms and enquiring whether he had read them, he replied that he had given them to some "càilleachs," who, he knew, would be delighted with them. "Hoot, toot, I *assure* you, Mr. Cumming, dear, it's no for the càilleachs I meant them; it was for *yoursell*," said poor Miss Gwynne; and the great hunter, perceiving

her genuine distress, promised to read whatever tracts she might present him with in future.

Those were the days when Fort-Augustus was the abode of many well-known characters. Indeed, during many previous years, it had been a very favourite place of settlement for ladies and gentlemen of limited income, who desired the benefit of country air, combined with the enjoyment of beautiful scenery and congenial society. Forty or fifty years ago there must have been a delightful little colony at Fort-Augustus, on the most familiar and pleasant terms with one another; but even so late as twenty or thirty years ago there were still many persons there of a most marked individuality, who might be seen regularly sauntering on the banks of the Canal, watching the passage of the steamer through the locks. Who that ever passed through Fort-Augustus, during that period, could forget the lion-hunter, with his magnificent kilted form and long ringlets, attended by his devoted admirer, clansman, and friend, the burly Donald Cumming? Or the redoubtable Captain Spalding (who had lost an arm in battle), and his portly wife? All these, as well as Miss Gwynne, used to await the arrival of the "Edinburgh Castle" to get a greeting from Captain Turner and to hail any acquaintances on board.

Miss Gwynne's delight was to bring any friend whom she might espy to her own cottage to partake

of tea, oatcakes, cheese, and eggs during the slow passage of the steamer through the locks, and carry away a pocketful of pears or apples to eat on the way. In her little drawing-room hung several handsomely-framed portraits of ladies and gentlemen who had at various periods rented shootings in the neighbourhood, and made her the almoner of their bounty ; and the mantelpiece was crowded with curiosities of all descriptions, bestowed by friends of all ranks. The last time the writer saw Miss Gwynne was in the autumn of 1860, when passing through the locks, accompanied by a friend. As usual, the old lady was standing on the Canal banks, clad in tartan gown and in a bonnet of a fashion belonging to years long gone by, while her homely freckled face, in its framework of sandy hair, was beaming with its wonted genial smiles. She had promised to come soon to pay a fortnight's visit in Inverness, but she wrote soon afterwards to say that bad health and constant suffering would not permit her to carry out her intentions. The beginning of her fatal illness had then set in, and the many friends in Inverness, who delighted in her society, never saw her again. She went to Edinburgh to undergo an operation for cancer, and died from its effects, among total strangers and far away from all she loved.

The splendid form and singularly handsome face of Roualeyn Gordon Cumming used once to be so often

seen on the streets of Inverness, that he also might be regarded as one of its characters.

He wore, when in town, a full Highland dress, with a plaid fastened by a large brooch, a broad Highland bonnet or a glittering helmet, huge shirt frills, buckled shoes, and a great quantity of jewellery (including silver fish-hooks in his ears), and carried an immense staff in his hand. But when in the country he has been known sometimes, if the day were warm, to go about clad in only a shirt and stockings, but carrying his kilt on his arm and his shoes in his hand. His hair was sometimes allowed to droop in long silken ringlets over his shoulders, and at others was gathered into a lady's net and fastened with a quantity of hairpins.

After his showroom had been removed from Inverness to Fort-Augustus, he often wandered about in the woods of Glenmoriston from morning till night, cutting down hazel with which to make walking sticks for sale. He used to speak to every one he met on the road with the greatest frankness, but with insinuating gentleness, and in a voice which was peculiarly musical, sentimental, and low—not at all the sort of voice one would imagine to belong to a mighty lion-hunter. To any old Highland càilleach he met on the road he was invariably as courteous as if she had been a duchess. Of the Highland girls he was a great admirer, and used to present the prettiest

among them with silver brooches and tartan plaids.

At Fort-Augustus he was contented to live in a little thatched cottage, and the society he most delighted in was that of Donald Cumming, the village blacksmith, an immensely tall, stout man, of great intelligence and warmth of heart, whom Roualeyn had inspired with a devotion and fidelity as great as ever filled the breast of any Highlander of old for the chief of his clan.

Donald would have died for Roualeyn ; he saw no fault in him, followed him about from place to place, and became as necessary to him as the light of day. If a dunning letter had to be answered, a disagreeable message conveyed, or a letter written to any of his relations with a request for money, Donald was ready to perform the task, and spare his hero the trouble and annoyance. Donald's home also was always at Roualeyn's service, at any hour he chose to enter it ; and many a supper was prepared by worthy Peggy Cumming's hospitable hands in her neat little parlour for her brother's patron, on his return, wet and weary, from some long expedition in the woods, however unseasonable might be the hour, and though his own abode was close at hand.

Before Roualeyn fixed his abode at Fort Augustus, Donald often went by invitation to visit at Altyre, driving there in a gig belonging to himself, and he

used to take Roualeyn back with him for a visit of some weeks, in the same conveyance, stopping a night on the way at an inn, where the supper consumed by the lion-hunter was generally of such magnitude as to alarm Donald, lest the landlady might imagine that he had eaten half, and he once slipped away to the kitchen to assure her that of the dozen large salt herring which had disappeared in the parlour only one had fallen to his share. Roualeyn thought nothing of finishing a whole gigot of mutton or a dozen herring at one meal, and was ready afterwards to do full justice to the landlady's oatcakes and cheese.

Once when Roualeyn and Donald were travelling about together, the eccentric dress of the former caused him to be mistaken for a lunatic, and Donald was asked if he was Roualeyn's keeper. "Faith! no," was the reply "but he is mine."

When any one suggested to Donald that he ought to show more firmness when his patron made demands upon his time and services, his reply was invariably the same, "How could I refuse Sir William's son?"

Donald used often to walk with his friend on the Canal Banks when the steamer was expected, and they were generally attended by a large tame goat. Numbers of people used to visit the showroom during the passage of the steamer through the locks—the price of admission being one shilling—and to purchase

walking sticks carved by Roualeyn, of which there were always a great many for sale.

Before removing to Fort Augustus, Roualeyn's Exhibition had been held in the building which is now occupied by the *Advertiser* Office, and which has gone through many strange phases. First of all it was used as the Free High Church under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Thorburn, and after Roualeyn's occupancy, it was used as the Bishop's Mission Chapel, before the erection of the Cathedral.

When Roualeyn first came home from foreign lands, he brought with him a little African servant whose antics and comical appearance attracted as many people to the showroom as the exhibition of stuffed wild beasts, but the unfortunate little fellow was taken ill with small pox, and died in the Inverness Infirmary, to his master's great grief.

Donald Cumming died shortly before his namesake and patron, and Fort Augustus, bereft of all its "Characters," as well as of many whose society invested it with a charm, seems now, notwithstanding the Monastery and the beauty of the surrounding scenery, like the mockery of its former self.

Miss Annie and Miss Peggy Grant were the daughters of the minister of Kilmonivaig, and resided in Inverness from the time of their father's death. They acquired local celebrity more from the great age to which they attained, and the extraordinary terms

on which they lived with each other, than from any other cause.

Miss Peggy was about ninety-six when she died, but Miss Annie, who was a good deal younger than her sister, survived her a long time and attained the age of ninety-nine. The latter was very proud of her age, and had always entertained the hope that she might complete her hundredth year, and thus outshine her sister Peggy. She was as touchy about being considered younger than she really was, as ladies in general are about being considered older. She was the prettier and more refined-looking of the two, and generally wore a soft fine white shawl and becoming cap. Miss Peggy was the better-natured, was full of cheerfulness, and had a store of anecdotes. Although they lived in the same house, they had separate sitting rooms, and never took any of their meals together. The one would not even permit her tea to be infused in the same tea-pot as that of the other, and they lived quite as much apart as if they were in separate dwelling-houses, making ceremonious calls for each other at stated intervals, when the one offered refreshment to the other, and they bowed and shook hands at parting—that is to say, if they did not quarrel during the interview, which was often the case.

When visitors came to call, the servant always asked, "Is it Miss Peggy or Miss Annie that you wish to see first?" and as Miss Annie was the one

whose dignity was most difficult to appease, it was always wisest to go upstairs to her parlour before going near Miss Peggy, who lived on the ground floor. "Have you been to see Peggy first?" was always Miss Annie's first question, in tones, the stiffness of which at once relaxed when she heard the answer, "Oh, no, Miss Annie, I wished *you* to have the first call". She would then chat on most pleasantly (for she was a kindly, well-informed woman), and would display—though she was quite blind—some pieces of needlework done in her younger days, when she was a skilful and tasteful embroiderer. She would then order in refreshment, after which, when the visitor rose to go, she would say in tones which might suit royalty granting a favour, "You may give a look at Peggy on your way out". Miss Peggy, of course, would inquire, "Have you been to see Annie before coming near me?" but kind little attentions and bits of news soon dissipated her wrath. However, woe betide the visitor who, on the tray with wine and cake being brought in, would say, "I cannot take anything, for I have already had refreshment from Miss Annie". That was indeed an unpardonable affront!

When Miss Peggy died, Miss Annie sold her furniture and removed to lodgings, where she was never allowed to feel lonely, for the children and grandchildren of her old friends used constantly to visit her. For years before her death she was stone-blind,

but she retained her other faculties in a most wonderful manner. A very short time before her death, while sitting up, supported by pillows in her bed, to which she had been confined for a year or two, she repeated to the writer the whole of the fourteenth chapter of St. John. Her memory was indeed most wonderful. Even then, when verging on her hundredth year, she could tell numberless entertaining anecdotes. She could give the history and trace back the ancestors of every family in Inverness, and she had a very great regard for birth and a good deal of Highland pride. She had also a great deal of shrewdness and insight into character. It was no easy matter to impose on Miss Annie, or to make her accept any reasons except the true ones, for any course of action. She was very touchy about people not calling often for her, fancying herself neglected if her friends did not go near her every few days. She thoroughly enjoyed getting any one to read to her, and a momentary gleam would often light up the small white refined face lying back on the pillows, when some of her favourite Scottish paraphrases, or some of the prayers of the Church of England (which, though a staunch Presbyterian, she loved to listen to) were whispered in her ear. She died, when to live longer would have been only a burden and a weariness to her, but her one great disappointment

was, that she had not attained the glory of completing her hundredth year !

Miss Peggy and Miss Annie Grant had belonged to a band of old ladies in Inverness, of whom many were designated by their christian names. Among these were "Miss Jeanie" (aunt to The Mackintosh); Miss Mary Jamieson; Miss Mary Mackintosh (better known as "Miss Mary Waterloo," from having long lived at Waterloo Place); Miss Johanna (who has been already described), and her aunt and cousin on Castle Street, Miss Mackintosh and Miss Macbean (Tortola); the three Misses Fraser of Farraline, Miss Grace, Miss Margaret, and Miss Kate; the cheerful, kind, and good Miss Munro (Munlochy), who always wore a broad band of black velvet across her forehead; and her sister, Mrs. Fraser, the most eccentric of human beings, who always went about in a black satin dress and costly shawl, but with an enormous poke bonnet and frilled collar reaching to her shoulders, a reticule and long veil, and with her face completely shrouded by a huge gingham umbrella, whatever the weather might be.

Mrs. Fraser was very fond of legal advice on every imaginable subject, and there was one solicitor in Inverness who was liable to receive messages or visits from her even at ten or eleven o'clock at night, demanding counsel or assistance. Her eccentricities generally precluded her from invitations to the little

tea-gatherings which were frequent among the other old ladies in Inverness, and at which there was not more scandal introduced than at the fashionable afternoon teas of the present day.

Besides meeting among themselves, some of these old ladies used to give very pleasant entertainments for young ladies in their teens. "Miss Mary Waterloo," in particular, was celebrated for the nice little evening parties to which she used to invite all her young friends, when she always showed her approval of those who were content with one cup of tea, by the bestowal of a cup of cream and jam, from which those who demanded a second supply of tea were debarred.

Miss Wapshott, the old lady who has already been referred to in these pages as having taught French and drawing on Church Street, was—although not an Invernessian—certainly one of the notabilities of Inverness. She had, at one time, kept a boarding school in Inverness on the west side of the river, together with a sister, but on the death of the latter, gave up housekeeping and retired into a lodging, where, although she had only one room for both bedroom and parlour, it was made to serve as school-room as well, and her high accomplishments always served to procure pupils for her, until age and infirmity forced her to give up teaching, and retire into a cottage in the country, where she died.

Her father had been a man of good position, who kept his carriage and men-servants, and many an amusing anecdote she used to relate of the dinner parties at his house, at which she, when a very young child, used to appear, so as to amuse the company with her singing.

Miss Wapshott always dressed in an antique fashion, with a remarkable bonnet surmounted by waving plumes. She was never known to have been absent from a funeral, for which sight she seemed to have a particular liking; and she must also have been of a very peaceable temperament, for if she saw two dogs fighting, she would make a rush at them with her umbrella and try to separate them. She had also a great love for cats, and used to pick up every starved stray one and carry it home to tend and nurse. At one time she had quite a colony of them, and her neighbours were to be pitied, as if any of the cats escaped and found their way to the house-tops, there must have been a great caterwauling. Miss Wapshott trained a cat and a canary at one time to live together in amity, and when she went out to take a saunter along the riverside, used to carry them both with her in a basket, showing them with triumph to every one she met.

When the cat, on attaining the venerable age of eleven years, became the mother of a family of kittens, it seemed to consider that the event required

to be celebrated in some signal manner, and its mode of doing so was by eating the poor canary! Miss Wapshott mourned the canary for a long time, but sought at last to console herself by taming a rat. Although she loved all animals and birds, there were very few of her fellow-creatures on whom she bestowed her affections. A few of her pupils, however, were intense favourites with her, and she regaled them often with her racy, humorous stories, and inspired them with sincere regard for her, even though she was irritable and touchy to the last degree. Her talent for drawing was something quite remarkable; her studies of female heads, in particular, were exquisitely finished, and her pupils sighed in vain to emulate their perfection.

There were many other old maiden ladies in Inverness at that period, who were famed for their peculiar ways, but space will not permit a description of them. The old gentlemen were very severe on them all, and used to quiz their love for gossip, of which they themselves, nevertheless, were very fond.

Dandy Charlie (Mr. Charles Lamont Robertson), used to note down the dates of all the births and marriages which took place, even when the parties concerned might have been supposed to have no possible interest for him. He was the oracle for all the news, public and private, in Inverness and within walking distance, and as he had a wide circle of acquaintances, he made

himself very agreeable and useful amongst them by retailing to each and all, the gossip he had gleaned. As he followed no profession, he had plenty of time on his hands, and when not calling for any of his acquaintances to detail the number of *entrées* which had been at the last fashionable dinner-party, he might be found with the other idle gentlemen on the Exchange, or in front of either of the booksellers' shops on High Street.

Neither he nor his clothes ever seemed to be the worse for the wear, so that one Inverness lady dubbed him "the Evergreen". He used to appear with each successive season in a particular suit, so that one had only to look at him to know whether it was spring, summer, autumn, or winter. He is best remembered by many people as arrayed in a white waistcoat and white trousers, light-coloured gloves of perfect fit, and carrying a light umbrella. He always looked as if he had just emerged from the hands of his valet; the wind never seemed to have ruffled the pile of his hat or the mud to have spattered his patent leather boots; his outer man was the essence of spotless purity!

The Laird of Inshes has passed away too recently, and was too widely known, to require to be recalled to the notice of any Invernessian, and the most of the anecdotes regarding him have been so widely circulated that it would be useless repetition to introduce them here.

It is difficult to realise that his handsome commanding form can no longer be seen perambulating the streets of Inverness, on the look-out for some acquaintance to bring home to dinner at Culcabock (for he never could endure to dine alone), and that his voice will never be heard again, uttering some joke or repartee.

He had always an answer ready for whoever might accost him on the road. Once on being asked if he was going to pay Mr. Grant the dentist a visit, he replied, "No; when I want extractors, I go to Stewart and Rule".

"Help the gentry first, and me afterwards," he used to say sarcastically, after he had sold his property, if, at any public entertainment, a plate was handed to him before any neighbour at table, who had risen in the world and only lately bought an estate.

There used to be another old dandy in Inverness at one time, although he was not one who was given to sarcastic speeches, or who cared much for society—particularly after the death of his wife, to whom he had been greatly devoted. This was "Old Dunmaglass," who lived for many years in lodgings on Margaret Street, but who kept a splendid high-bred horse (in the stables on Academy Street, which terminated Miss Mackintosh of Raigmore's garden on Church Street), on which he used to ride out every day—his erect figure carefully and foppishly attired,

his pug nose and fair hair being familiar objects to every dweller in Inverness. Latterly, however, as he became feebler, he went out only in his close carriage.

His greatest peculiarity was his love of cats, of which he kept a great number, and had a furnished room for their use alone. On any special occasion, such as a cat's birthday, the neighbouring cats were invited to dine with them, and a roast of meat and a plum pudding were prepared for the occasion, and the cats placed on chairs all round the table. He considered that the greatest honour he could pay any lady was to present her with a cat, and when he gave one away he used to send every day to inquire for its health.

At an earlier date than many Invernessians can recall, there resided in Inverness a gentleman whose eccentricities were probably never rivalled. He was the son of a landed proprietor, and his real name was Phineas Mackintosh, but he generally went by the name of "Phinny Fool". He resided with his sister Catherine, whom he always called "Katack," in a commodious house near the foot of Castle Street, on the west side, having its entrance within a court. It is now converted into the premises of an auctioneer. In this house he used constantly to give large and costly dinner parties, to which all the gentlemen of the first position in the neighbourhood

were invited. A policeman had to be stationed in the court on those occasions, to keep away a crowd of boys who were always attracted by a figure of a Highlander outside the entrance door, from a pipe in the mouth of which, on the night of a party, a jet of light was made to issue.

The best of fare was always to be met with at Phinny's table, and the choicest wine, and the dinner lasted for several hours ; but after each entertainment, when he sat down to count the cost and found how much it amounted to, he used to wring his hands, and wail, and cry. If there was anything at table that he did not care for himself, he used to order it away without inquiring whether any of his guests wished to partake of it. On one occasion, he is reported to have said, when the cheese was brought in, "Who is for cheese? I am for none. Take away the cheese".

His after-dinner speeches and toasts were the best part of Phinny's entertainment. They were all given in crambo (which indeed was introduced into his ordinary conversation every day), and the remarks he made to his guests throughout the whole of the time they were seated at his table, though generally the reverse of complimentary, used to convulse them with laughter. One specimen will suffice :

" Kilcoy,
You Ross-shire boy,

Drink off your glass,
You stupid ass."

Some of the guests used mischievously to ply Phinny with his own wine, until he generally ended by slipping under the table.

On the day when a party was expected Phinny kept continually running about the house, clad in a large white apron, arranging dishes, superintending cooking, and giving all manner of directions and assistance, although he always kept a good staff of servants.

The fear of incurring the displeasure of the Rev. Dr. Rose prevented Phinny from giving dinner-parties on Sunday, but he always liked to bring home some friend from the church door to dinner with him, and always ordered a better dinner than ordinary to be in readiness on that day. On one occasion when he brought home a gentleman whom he wished to treat with special ceremony, he found that the roast which had been ordered had been allowed to get burnt, and he rushed about the house screaming that he would get all the servants put into jail, but even then—so strong was the force of habit—uttering his rebukes in crambo, which caused roars of laughter.

Phinny was very fond of attending the various cattle markets, and on these occasions he generally drank so much whisky, as to cause him to enter into various business transactions, the memory of which was completely effaced from his mind by the fol-

lowing day. At one market he bought a large bull, which he ordered, on coming home at night, to be securely fastened in the close in which his dwelling-house was situated. Early in the morning his slumbers were rudely disturbed by the roaring of the animal, but being by this time perfectly oblivious of the extraordinary purchase he had made, Phinny was completely mystified as to the cause of the unwonted sounds below his window. As soon as daylight and sobriety had completely set in, he took care to get rid of his bargain, and to secure better rest for the following night.

He used to attend the Northern Meeting Balls regularly, and on these occasions was always arrayed in a scarlet waistcoat embroidered with gold, and with bright buttons on his coat. He was a tall, stoutly-made man, with a weakness in one of his legs, which he dragged after him, so that he did not walk much, but used to drive about in a high gig drawn by a fine horse. It was said that he kept one of his toes, which had been amputated, preserved in spirits on his dining-room mantel piece! His favourite place of resort was "Skelpin Sandy's" shop on the Exchange.

In his youth, Phinny had held a commission in a regiment in the West Indies, but on the first occasion when fighting occurred, he ran to hide himself in a ditch. "It was not the powder I was afraid of," he used to say, "but the balls that were flying about." He sold his

commission and returned to Scotland, after having amassed a great deal of money in the West Indies, but as no one could credit him with having had sufficient sense to have acquired his fortune by his own efforts, it was the belief of most people that he had been left a legacy.

He remained in Inverness till his death, dispensing, with the assistance of his sister, hospitality to all his acquaintances, and leaving behind him the memory of a warmth and kindness of heart such as is seldom equalled among wiser men.

There were many other "characters" well-known in Inverness, in a different position of life. One of these, who went by the name of "Knockie," although his real name was Hugh Fraser, was, for many years head-clerk with the writer's uncle and father. Knockie was well connected, being the son of Captain Fraser of Knockie (the celebrated composer of Scotch music), and the nephew of Sir Hugh Fraser of Braelangwell. He was also a man of considerable ability and intelligence, with a great knowledge of law, and might have attained to a good position as a solicitor, had it not been for an unfortunate failing which blighted his prospects, and which, though he long struggled against it, he was never able to overcome. It was, however, his only fault, and never could it have been more truly said of anyone than of poor Knockie, that he was "no one's enemy but his own".

For some years he gave way to his failing only at periodical times, generally once in six weeks, and often stayed away a fortnight. He used to slink back again in a shame-faced way (after having hung about the door for some time, summoning up his courage to enter) and seat himself on his high stool, trying as rapidly as possible to make up for lost time and get through the work which had accumulated in his absence. At first, earnest remonstrances used to await him on his return, but at last it was seen that they were quite unnecessary, for no one could have been more alive than Knockie himself was to the sad nature of his position, and more anxious that it should be amended. His desk was all filled with extracts about intoxication, which he had copied from books, as well as notes from sermons on that subject, which he always made a point of going to hear. His own ideas about his besetting sin, and all his feelings of remorse, and wishes to lead a different life, were also written down on scraps of paper, and sometimes indeed were embodied into elaborate essays. As time went on, however, his absences became more frequent and extended over a longer period of time, and as remonstrances were seen at last to be quite ineffectual, it became the usual thing for Knockie, after an absence of a month or six weeks, to seat himself at his desk, without any notice being taken of his having been away.

On the occasions when he used to wander about in the close near the office door, ashamed to enter, and not yet entirely sober, he was often seen by the cook, who used to invite him down to the kitchen, and give him a large bowl of strong coffee to fortify his courage and clear his brain. He was at these times thrown a good deal into the society of an attractive housemaid, who, to remarkably lively and agreeable manners, and a bright smiling face, united the fascination of a magnificent voice which would have made her fortune on the stage. Knockie became a victim to her charms, but he never had sufficient courage to make her an offer of marriage by word of mouth, nor even get the length of writing a love letter like Dalmigavie. It was on the wall of the close in which both the dwelling-house and office were situated that Knockie, with a pencil or a bit of coal, used to inscribe his rapturous and complimentary effusions, in the hope that Jane might see them. Her quick eyes did so readily enough, and every morning she looked out for some freshly-written rhapsodies, but the encouragement she bestowed was not sufficient to make poor Knockie speak to her on the subject. He still, however, liked to haunt the kitchen in the evenings, following in the wake of a bolder admirer of hers, Macdonald, the "Amen" of St. John's Church, who was then a widower, and who used to sing, in what he considered an irresistible manner, the appropriate song

of "My pretty Jane," seated in the most comfortable corner near the fire, while poor Knockie with a shy grin on his face, loitered about the door.

The figure of Knockie with that grin on his face, and sometimes a pen behind his ear, his flaxen hair standing straight up from his head which was generally to one side, and his arms hanging straight down at each side, was a well-known sight at the street corners of Inverness; but if anyone related to his employers came in sight, the grin vanished—unless he was very far gone—and he precipitately fled.

His odd manner of jerking out his sentences (even when quite sober), his bashfulness, his peculiar smile, and sidelong glances caused him to be well remembered by anyone who had seen him only once, but no one could think of him with any feelings except those of pity and kindness. He was the soul of honour, and under his uncouth exterior and many eccentricities, was a kind and faithful heart with the feelings of a gentleman, and a most amiable and obliging disposition. When sober, he was a most invaluable clerk, and he wrote a beautiful hand, and showed great skill, carefulness, and neatness in everything he did, even in the very mending of pens, which many ladies, knowing that this was a special forte of his, used to employ him to do for them.

There are no clerks like him now; they have died out like the old shopkeepers and the old servants; he

was perhaps the last of the race in Inverness, old-fashioned, quaint, humble, respectful, eccentric, shy, with one failing, but with a heart of gold!

There was another character who was as well-known at the street corners of Inverness as Knockie himself. This was John Macrae, who went by the name of "Macrae the Poet," and who might have been seen every day sauntering along High Street, in a blue coat with brass buttons, a grey plaid, and wide hat, murmuring to himself, and with his "eye in a fine frenzy rolling". Macrae had once been head waiter in an hotel in Inverness, and was an amiable and inoffensive man. He got a book of poems and songs printed in the year 1816, and a pamphlet in the year 1832, and continued to get various pieces printed from time to time until his death. When any person of good position died in Inverness, Macrae was sure to compose a lament for the occasion, for which he usually got a present of money. If any acquaintance addressed a remark to him on the street, he generally replied to it in rhyme, which seemed to come more readily to his lips than anything else, so that people often accosted him for the sake of puzzling him with some word with which another could not readily be found to correspond in sound. He was generally followed by a dog, on whose collar was the inscription, "I am John Macrae's dog. Whose dog are you?"

Another character well-known in days of old, was "Cockle Cumming" (son of Mr. Lachlan Cumming of Muirfield House), whose name was probably a corruption of "Goggle Cumming," as he had peculiarly round staring eyes. He was a tall slender young man, with a very red face, and always wore a broad Highland bonnet on the side of his head, checked trousers, and often a plaid across his shoulders. He took particularly long strides as he went along the road, and swung his arms in a most conspicuous manner, glancing from side to side with an expression which signified that he considered himself "the glass of fashion and the mould of form, th' observed of all observers".

He was a harmless individual, and spent the greater part of his existence in fishing in the lochs and burns of Inverness-shire, and in admiring the fair sex. He was as susceptible as Dalmigavie, and the objects of his adoration were generally young ladies in a higher social sphere than his own, and with whom he had never exchanged words. The manner in which he testified his devotion for any lady was always by leaving a basket of trout of his own fishing at her door, with "Mr. Cumming's compliments"; and often the lady for whom they were intended had no idea who the swain was to whom she was indebted for the offering.

One favourite resort of "Cockle Cumming's" was

Drummond wood. He might often be seen sauntering along the side of the Aultnaskiah burn, with his fishing basket slung across his back, or else stretched on the mossy bank, gazing sentimentally on the bits of blue sky, seen through the overhanging branches, and evidently musing on some lady love—perhaps composing “A woful ballad to his mistress’ eyebrow”.

Kennedy Macnab was a character who mixed much more in local public affairs than any of those hitherto named, and was far from being harmless, being, in fact, held in almost universal dread. His uncle had been tutor in the Culloden family, and his father factor on the Culloden property, and Kennedy himself was for a long time clerk in the Culloden tile-works, and might have risen to a good position, for he was singularly clever and intelligent ; but he became the slave of debasing habits, and turned his talents to no good account.

For a long time he was Editor of a newspaper in Inverness called *The Reformer*, in which he mercilessly held up to ridicule and abuse every person to whom he had the slightest dislike. There was hardly any gentleman in Inverness who escaped having some scandal narrated about him in *The Reformer*. Even ladies had their behaviour commented upon in the pages of this dreaded newspaper, which was particularly severe upon such among them as were not gifted with much humility. There was no race of men to

whom Macnab seemed to have such a dislike as lawyers. No copy of *The Reformer* ever appeared without one of the profession being attacked, and on many occasions the Editor was taken before the Sheriff for libel, and was once even lodged in jail ; but in many instances he had some slight foundation on which to build his fabric of scandal, and this made him a foe to be dreaded all the more. There were only one or two lawyers in the town towards whom he seemed to have no ill-will, and whose names were never mentioned in the columns of his paper.

Kennedy used to go about the streets dressed in a slovenly manner, as if he had slept all night in his clothes ; and with his hands always stuck in his trouser pockets, and his broad Highland bonnet perched on the side of his head. There were many people who shrank from the gaze of his keen, bold, black eyes, and turned down the nearest lane or close to avoid him, for the objects of his hate and mockery were many—the objects of his respect and approval few. He was, however, capable of feeling intense gratitude for trifling favours—gratitude which lasted long after the remembrance of the favours had entirely faded from the minds of the bestowers ; and this trait in his character, combined with his ready appreciation of consistent and unostentatious excellence, may be considered not only as redeeming him from deserving

to be considered entirely evil, but as proving that he possessed at least two good qualities which are too often wanting among those who rank high in the world's esteem.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WANDERERS OF OLD INVERNESS.



IN those days there were few public charities in Inverness, and subscription lists were rarely published in the papers, but an immense deal was given away in private charity, and a strong *personal* interest was felt in the recipients. Each family had its own pet beggars, who called regularly on particular days of the week, and received hot broth—for a pot was boiled on these days specially for them—and had their aprons or baskets filled with broken bread and meat, potatoes and meal, besides regularly receiving money and old clothes at longer intervals. Many of these pensioners consisted of idiots or half-witted creatures such as are now always confined in asylums or poorhouses, but some of them had only a “want,” and were able to earn a precarious livelihood by going errands, putting in coals, or carrying luggage to the coach.

Prominent among those latter was Walter Sim, the town porter, a respectful and courteous individual

of unimpeachable honesty and fidelity, who might be seen hanging about the doors of the principal shops, with a rope round his neck, his lank black hair hanging down to his shoulders, his mild brown eyes beaming with pleasure at the sight of any of his patrons.

Walter did not like to be classed with beggars, and always declined eating with them. His great ambition was to be considered a footman at one of the houses which he frequented several times a week. On one occasion, while seated in his ragged clothes and nearly soleless shoes, in the kitchen of one of the families that patronised him (all alone, as the servants were busy up stairs), a messenger arrived with a letter, which she declined leaving until she could deliver it into the hands of one of the servants. "It will be quite safe with me," said Walter, solemnly and grandly, "for I am the footman." "I did not know they kept a footman," said the girl, laughing. "I am the daily footman," was Walter's reply; "I do not reside in the house."

Walter wrote a great quantity of what he styled "poetry". If a birth, marriage, or death occurred among the families of his patrons, or if any one related to them sailed for abroad, Walter always made the event the subject of one of his poems, which seldom contained less than twenty verses, and he used at once to proceed to the house with a

copy of his poetical effusions, and request that it should be sent upstairs with "Walter's compliments".

When he had made up his mind to get married, he called at the office of a solicitor who had always been very kind to him, and requested the head clerk to lend him a coat to wear at the ceremony. The loan was granted, but we need hardly say that Walter was not permitted to return it. He was very loyal, and named his eldest daughter for the Queen, while the second was called "Patricia," for a gentleman who had befriended him.

Walter was never known to ask for money, but a message from the kitchen that "Walter had called to inquire for the health of the family," was always taken as a hint that he was badly off, and there were several families where that modest hint was never given in vain, for poor Walter—always obliging, polite, gentle and trustworthy—was a universal favourite. He picked up a precarious livelihood by putting in coals (for they were not then sent round in bags), and by shovelling away snow from the pavements in winter, as well as by doing occasional errands ; but long fasts and exposure to the weather at last quite broke down his slight and delicate frame, and a time came when Walter's well-known form was no longer seen at any shop door, and his low and humble bow, and meek, pathetic smile, no longer greeted his benefactors.

“Water Lexy” was an aged woman who had acquired that name from having maintained herself in her earlier days by carrying pails of water from the river to the houses in town, at the time when no water had been introduced there by pipes. With the introduction of pipes into the houses, Lexy’s occupation ceased, and she was reduced to beggary, for she was by that time too old to learn to support herself in any other way.

She resided in Grant’s Close, off High Street, together with a sister, who, being in weak health, was confined to the house and was dependent on Lexy for support, but who was able occasionally to earn a trifle by taking in a few light articles of clothing to wash—having been a good laundress in her younger days. That Lexy sometimes throve well by her begging may be inferred from the fact that a neighbour, who called to see them one morning on business, found the two sisters enjoying a luxurious breakfast, consisting of tea, bread and cheese, a roasted haddock, and a dram for each!

Lexy was bent nearly double, and her enormous feet had never any better covering than footless stockings and carpet shoes, so tattered that they had to be tied on with pieces of twine. She had a very melancholy and mild expression, and spoke very little and in a low and humble voice.

Walter Sim and she frequented the same houses,

and invariably met there on such days as Christmas, but the briefest possible greeting passed between them then, for Walter, although humble and deferential to his superiors, had a particularly distant manner to his fellow-pensioners, and considered himself several pegs above this poor, broken-down water-woman. Lexy never resented his manner, nor did she ever answer back when found fault with by any one. All spirit seemed to have been crushed out of her, as well as all pleasure in life. However, when a sixpence or shilling was dropped into her large, bony, shaking hand, or a plate of hot broth was placed before her, she never failed to make a low and deferential curtsey and to utter courteous and grateful thanks. Children were very fond of her, for her manner to them was always tender, and they never failed to hear her address each of them as “M’eudal bhoichd”. She must have been a great age when she died, but she predeceased her acquaintance Walter by many years.

“Big Bell” was superior in appearance to either of the individuals we have just described. She was always exquisitely clean and neat, and invariably wore a blue printed cotton gown with white spots (what is called the “bird’s-eye” pattern), a scarlet shawl, a snow-white muslin cap with frills, a yellow silk handkerchief bandaged across her brow, white woollen stockings and carpet slippers or neat shoes.

Her manner was particularly gentle and courteous, and she dearly loved young people.

Her favourite place of resort was the "Grocery" on High Street (where she and many other old women used to assemble to receive presents of tea and sugar from Mr. Simpson), but there were several kitchens in private houses which she honoured with frequent calls, and she would have been indeed indignant had she been treated there in the light of a beggar. She resided in a garret on Tomnahurich Street, of which she used to give terrifying accounts to the children of her patrons, for it was infested by rats, and Bell had always to keep a big stick beside her bed during the night, with which to frighten them away.

A brother of Bell's having died in the West Indies, left £180 to be equally divided among herself and a brother and sister, but her relatives—thinking that they might easily outwit so weak-minded a creature—tried to defraud her of it, and Bell discovered that her brother and his wife were on the eve of starting for America with her share of the money. She at once consulted a solicitor in whose kitchen she had been a frequent guest, and he not only undertook her case, but caused her to come forth victorious, though, of course, his services were rendered gratuitously. Bell was deeply grateful, and at once bought a large quantity of cakes, fruit, and confections for the children of her benefactor, and declared her intention

of making them her legatees. This desire of hers, however, was over-ruled, but she could not be prevented from making a will in which the lawyer's sister-in-law, nephew, and cook were named as her heirs.

She never made arrangements to change her abode or to buy any piece of furniture without first going to her legatees to ask whether they approved or whether they considered that their legacy might be too greatly diminished by so much outlay. Of course their approval was always obtained, and they were not the least surprised that when poor Bell died, all the money that was left was only what sufficed to cover the expenses of her burial.

Nanny Do Dolan was a very different kind of individual from either "Water Lexy" or "Big Bell". Although half-witted like them, she had none of their amiability and kindliness, their love for children, or their good principles and trustworthiness. On the contrary, she was the terror of all the children in the neighbourhood, and her drunkenness and love of quarrelling were proverbial. She maintained herself principally by buying fish for several of the shopkeepers and carrying it to their customers in the country, and she sometimes had to carry her basket as great a distance as thirty miles from Inverness.

Well does the writer remember when at the age of six years, being on a visit twenty-four miles from

Inverness and at play on the banks of Loch Ness, hearing one day the loud and dreaded tones of Nanny Do Dolan shouting out from between the birch trees at the top of the bank above the loch, "I have found you at last". Nanny was then on her way with fish to the Inn at Invermoriston, and having recognised one of the Inverness children whom she loved to torment, she thought it good sport to shout out this remark, and then go away leaving her victim half dead with fright.

It was quite sufficient for the nursery maids of Inverness at this period, when their charges were naughty or would not go to sleep, to whisper, "I will send for Nanny Do Dolan," for all they wished for was then at once effected. The servant girls themselves used also to dread her, for she delighted in tormenting them, and at the time when all the water had to be conveyed from the river, she used to come behind and overthrow their pails. Several anecdotes illustrative of Nanny's quarrelsome propensities and great bodily strength are related in the Second Part of Munro's *Recollections of Inverness*, which was published in 1870—seven years later than the First Part, to which we have already alluded.

Her honesty was far from unimpeachable, and her love for drink was notorious, but she possessed a considerable amount of humour and shrewdness. The writer well remembers seeing her conveyed quite help-

less and intoxicated in a wheel-barrow to the old "Black Hole" on Bridge Street amid the shouts and jeers of a crowd of boys. During her latter days she became better conducted and more amiable, but still there are many middle-aged citizens of Inverness, both at home and abroad, who can hardly recall without a shudder the vision of old Nanny as she shook her fist in their faces on the street, with the question hissing from her lips, "Are you good bairns the day?" A cousin of the writer's took a portrait (in crayons) of her in this attitude, which is still in good preservation.

For a long time Nanny and her mother resided together in a thatched cottage on the site of Mr. Smith the hairdresser's present shop. The mother attained a great age, and was long bedridden before she died. The fact of her being Nanny Do Dolan's mother caused her to be regarded by the young people of that period as something "uncanny". A lady, who was a little school girl at that time, told the writer that she and her young companions used to find a strange fascination in going, on their way from school, to have a peep in at one of the windows of the cottage, in order to watch the old woman sitting up in bed, combing her white hair, and muttering to herself. They were always in fear and trembling, however, lest Nanny should appear on the scene and chastise them for taking such a liberty.

"Foolish Mary" had at one time been a servant in

many respectable families, but an unfortunate love affair had upset her reason. She lived alone in a garret at the foot of Academy Street, and had no means of subsistence except the charity which was given to her in the kitchens which she frequented. She always wore an old knitted cap, a little shawl and an apron of printed cotton, and was celebrated for anything but cleanliness. She was rarely heard to utter any word except "ay" or "no," and her expression was that of deep moodiness and gloom. If teased or irritated, she could be roused to the fiercest anger and rage, and has often been known to fling a knife at whatever servant girl might have offended her, or to chase her with the kitchen poker, her eyes meanwhile blazing with maniacal fury. At other times, however, she was quite harmless and subdued.

Servants who were inclined to be lazy often employed Mary to help them in such offices as picking fowls, cleaning knives, brushing shoes, &c., and as Mary knew quite well that they disobeyed their mistress's orders in doing so, she always consented to be locked in the cellar, at the sound of any footstep coming downstairs from the dining-room, if engaged in any of these avocations. She was always, however, permitted to have a meal of good broth or meat in a number of kitchens in Inverness, for her miserable fate had gained the pity of all who were acquainted with her former history. Although she

connived with the servant girls in concealing the shirking of their work, she had not sufficient sense to carry out the deception when questioned, and when asked, "What were you doing in the cellar, Mary?" she would always reply, "Pickee hen," or "Blackee shoe".

She sometimes liked to get an old piece of faded ribbon to put in her knitted cap, for it seemed to remind her dimly of former days when she had been a young servant girl as smart looking and as giddy as those who now made her their slave and butt.

Another "Foolish Mary," more commonly called "Mary Stoddart" to distinguish her from the other, was quite a different kind of individual. She was a stout, rosy-cheeked, barefooted, jovial character, who went about the country without shawl or bonnet, singing and dancing, but who could, nevertheless, be roused to rage if teased, and chased and pelted with stones any children who tormented her.

She was a much greater favourite than the other "Foolish Mary," on account of her high spirits and love of fun, and could easily be induced by the promise of a penny or a cup of tea, to sing a Gaelic song or dance the Highland Fling. Her entrance into any kitchen was generally preceded by loud yells called forth by the jeers of the boys who had followed her along the street, and it generally took some time to pacify her, but once her good humour was restored,

she was ready to contribute everything in her power to the general merriment.

She and the other Mary had a great dislike to, and a great jealousy of, each other. It was no joke when they met in the same kitchen, for the slightest circumstance roused their ire, and caused them to be at daggers drawn, and it often occasioned the greatest ingenuity to separate the two enemies, and induce one of them to withdraw quietly and leave the field open for the other. When every other means failed, a penny proved the most efficacious and successful resort.

“Ally with the Petticoats” was so named on account of his always wearing, instead of trousers, a long petticoat down to his ankles. He was a big, stout man, and was generally barefooted, but always wore a broad Highland bonnet, jacket and waistcoat, and a long blue and white checked apron, filled with meal and potatoes, which he got in the various houses he frequented, and which he kept devouring as he waddled along the streets. He was very quiet and inoffensive, but used to be constantly muttering or singing to himself, and generally carried about with him a ball of worsted and a darning needle, with which he attempted to darn his long petticoat when he sat down to rest on a doorstep.

His principal enjoyment consisted in attending all the sacramental gatherings which took place in con-

nection with the various Presbyterian churches in the Highlands, especially those which were held in the open air. Whenever the Rev. Doctor Kennedy of Dingwall held a sacramental service in the Inverness Chapelyard, Ally was sure to be there, making tremendous strides from one tombstone to another sometimes even trying to step over the bowed heads of the congregation, as they sat listening to the minister's address, and thereby having a most disturbing effect on their devotions. His love and admiration for ministers were extreme, and great indeed was his glee if one of them condescended to take notice of him, and address a few friendly words to him.

When the Rev. Alexander Clark of the West (Established) Church died, leaving behind him a fragrant memory, which will long be cherished in Inverness, poor Ally attended his funeral, one of the truest mourners there. When night came on, and the poor wanderer had not returned to his humble dwelling, search was made for him, and he was found stretched on his benefactor's grave, weeping and wailing with a grief that refused to be comforted.

There was another foolish Ally, who sometimes went by the name of “Allaidh na h-ùbhala,” on account of his having no palate, and at other times by the name of “Lady Saltoun's Fool,” because that lady—grandmother of the present Lord Saltoun—

allowed him a small yearly income and the run of her kitchen, whenever he liked to go there.

When the writer remembers him, he was a very old man of a weak, bent frame, and with white hair, and a long, ragged beard. He was quite harmless, but owing to the want of a palate, his voice always sounded peculiar and uncouth, and it was so difficult to understand any word he uttered, that he generally had to make known his requests by signs.

He lived on Lady Saltoun's estate, and used to come into town to do messages for her household on market days. He also regularly attended church in Inverness on Sundays, and often was allowed to come in on the back seat of Lady Saltoun's carriage. He was arrayed in cast-off, faded livery with brass buttons, under a ragged cloak, and regarded himself as one of the servants at Ness Castle, although he did not consider it beneath his dignity to receive a penny or a bowl of meal in many an Inverness kitchen. There was nothing he liked better than being questioned about Lady Saltoun.

In his younger days it had been the fashion for the old County families in the Highlands to keep a character like Ally always hanging about their kitchens, who got regular wages, cast-off livery, and plentiful meals, and was expected in return to afford mirth to both master and servants. To have a

regular "Fool" in the kitchen was always a mark of aristocracy.

There was an old man who came to reside at Nairn, and who used to visit Inverness twice a year—never failing to come at the time of the Northern Meeting, when he attended the games and listened with delight to the pipe music. He went by the name of "Lord John Russell," as he fancied he was that nobleman, and actually bore a strong resemblance to him. He always went about bareheaded and barefooted, and though often offered a hat and shoes, no power could induce him to wear them. His hair was snow-white and his appearance very striking. No one knew where he originally came from, what he had been, or what his real name was, although it was generally believed to be Russell. He always expressed himself in the language of an educated man, and his manner was so superior—even refined—as to give rise to the opinion that he had at one time held the position of a gentleman. The mystery about him was never solved, nor what had overthrown his intellect; but there can be no doubt that the poor wanderer had once moved in a much higher social sphere than that in which he was known in the North. There are many Invernessians who still speak of him as "the gentleman," and no one who remembers him at all could speak without kindness and pity of poor "Lord John".

"Eeldy Aldy" was the nickname of a poor idiot

lad, who roamed about the streets barefooted and bareheaded, and clad in a very long shepherd-tartan kilt. His principal amusement consisted in running away with the door-mats from all the houses in town, so that his old mother, who was an honest, decent woman, was obliged to neglect her home and other children and follow Eeldy wherever he might wander, so as to keep guard over his purloining propensities. Sometimes, however, he was too quick for her, and would have seized a mat and rushed away with it round the corner of the street before she had time to stop him. It was a very usual thing for Eeldy's mother to arrive at some gentleman's kitchen late at night with a mat which her son had carried away during the day. She soon learnt to recognise the various mats in town, and seldom made a mistake in carrying the right ones to their respective owners.

Eeldy did not always confine his depredations to mats. If he could only get inside a house, nothing came amiss to him, but his poor mother's aim was to prevent his entering any house at all. When evening came she always tried to keep him locked up, but this was no easy task, and he often eluded her vigilance.

The writer recollects when very young being once seated alone in the dining-room when the table was laid for tea, and being suddenly startled by the entrance of the tall, bare-legged Eeldy Aldy, who seized a loaf from the table, held it high above his

head with a triumphant grin, and glided out with his prize as noiselessly as he had entered. He had come in by the back entrance, had run up a stairs leading from the lower regions, and now made his exit by the same route, without being heard by any of the servants, and before the child who saw him had time to give the alarm.

Eeldy was very good-natured, and never got into rages although often teased by boys. He was rarely seen without his poor mother running after him, or hanging on to his jacket, so that the expression, "Always together like Eeldy Aldy and his mother," became quite a proverb in Inverness, and was used to denote inseparable companions.

John Morgan was a half-witted creature, who picked up a precarious livelihood as a porter, like Walter Sim, and might often be seen going about with a hurley, whistling and singing to himself. He was very good-natured and ready to do any errand.

At an earlier date three idiots, named Bobby All, Big John, and Ally Watson, had gained much celebrity in Inverness. Bobby All was a miserable-looking little creature, who was full of impish tricks, and used to roam about the streets—often through the night as well as through the day—uttering extraordinary cries.

Big John was a tall powerful man, who was kindly permitted by Mr. Wilson of the Caledonian Hotel to

have his bed and board there, and who used to hang about the door of the hotel speaking to every one who passed in or out. He was excessively fond of snuff, and used to go to all the shops and accost every passer-by with demands for some to put into his snuff-box. Visitors to the hotel were in the habit of giving him not only plenty of snuff but plenty of money.

Ally Watson was a tall, erect man, who always went about without any covering on his head or feet, and was so good natured and obliging, that he was a universal favourite. When asked where he had slept during the previous night, he always answered, "In the wherry"—meaning the ferry—and added, when asked if he had felt it uncomfortable, "It was like an icicle".

Ally Watson always did whatever he was told however ridiculous it might be. If carrying a pail of water from the river, and told to pour it out on the street or leave it standing there, he did so at once. One day while holding a little child in his arms and playing with it, a mischievous boy told him to throw it down, so without a moment's hesitation, he dashed it on the pavement, and it died from the effects of the injuries received. Poor Ally was from that time banished to the Infirmary, where he was kept in confinement among the lunatics, and died soon afterwards. His death had no doubt been hastened by his being deprived of his freedom, and debarred

from the rambles to which he had been accustomed all his life.

Many years ago an extraordinary little woman used to visit Inverness, who is remembered by hardly any one living now. She was called "Seùn nam pòcaidean," or "Jenny of the pockets," on account of her upper garment—which could hardly be called a gown—being covered with pockets from her neck to her ankles.

Once, after a long absence in Glen-Urquhart, she entered "Donald Iron's" shop, and he said to her, "Where have you been all this long time, Jenny?" "Oh, I have been to the moon." "Indeed! And how did you manage to get up there?" "Oh, the going up was nothing, it was the coming down that was difficult." "And how did you manage that?" "I went into a shop in the moon, and I bought twopence worth of soft soap, and rubbed it on the soles of my feet, and then I slipped down on a rainbow."

At a still earlier period, Inverness was occasionally visited by a very remarkable character, who belonged to the Aird, and whose real name was James Mackenzie, but who was better known in the country by the appellation of "the Ceannaiche" (or merchant), as he used to roam about with a bundle of books and pamphlets for sale, through Glen-Urquhart (where he had a brother a schoolmaster) and also through Glen-

moriston and Kintail. In these districts he was always gladly welcomed, and got a night's lodging in many a farm-house.

It was in his youth that he was thus a wanderer, and there is no one now alive who was acquainted with the Ceannaiche then, but there are a very few people who remember him as he was in his old age, when his wanderings were over, and he had settled down in Glenmoriston, which he had so long frequented, that he felt more at home there than in his birthplace, the Aird.

The Ceannaiche was half-witted, but he was a great reader of poetry, and a lover of books in general, especially *dictionaries*, which he used to devour from beginning to end, so that he was always able to afford information as to the signification of any word not in general use.

He had also actually taught himself French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and astronomy ! It was a most remarkable thing that one who had a decided "want," and was quite incapable of managing the ordinary affairs of life, should have possessed such intellectual tastes and such a power of application for study. He always expressed himself like a well-educated person, and had an extraordinary love for the society of ladies and gentlemen. In fact, he quite shrank from intercourse with persons in his own rank of life.

The late Mr. James Murray Grant of Glenmoriston

paid for the Ceannaiche's board in the Glen, and entirely supported him, so that he always had leisure for his favourite pursuits, and although he always assisted in threshing corn at some of the farms, he used often to rest in the midst of doing so in order to write down translations from some Greek or Hebrew book.

When the family in whose kitchen the Ceannaiche had for years been permitted to take his meals—and to sit by the fire pouring over his books, before retiring to rest in his little room above the stable—quitted their home at the top of the Glen, the poor old man mourned their departure with a grief that refused to be consoled. He had now no educated persons near him with whom he could converse. According to himself, he had “no society but that of clowns”. There was no one to whom he could read the translations which he daily wrote down from his beloved books, no one who could appreciate or enter with interest into his studies of the planets and stars. His favourite pursuits now lost their charm for him, since no kindred spirit was at hand to encourage and sympathise, and his intellect rapidly began to become more and more clouded and confused. He gave up writing and reading, and used to spend hours in the company of a little dog and a lame chicken which his benefactors had left behind, and to speak to them as if they could understand and could enter into all his grief and desolation.

There was a little old woman who lived in a little turf-roofed cottage on the same farm, and whom he considered better fitted than any other human being to enter into his feelings, for not only was she as courteous and gentle-mannered as himself, and as elevated in her ideas, but her attachment to the family on whose farm she had long lived was equal in intensity to his own. Her name was Mary Macdonald, but she generally went by the name of "The Lady," or "Lady Hood," from being in the habit of constantly talking about Lady Hood, mother of the late Seaforth.

Mary was in her way quite as remarkable a character as the Ceannaiche himself, although there certainly was no deficiency in *her* intellect. On the contrary, she possessed extraordinary shrewdness, sense, and intelligence. In her youth she had gone regularly to the shearing, not only in Ross-shire and various northern counties, but in Midlothian, and had thus been able each year to lay by a little sum of money. She had very often been shearing in the neighbourhood of Brahan, and had thus acquired her knowledge of the lady who became her favourite heroine.

Mary could not speak a word of English, and could neither read nor write, but she possessed a most poetical nature, and expressed herself in language which would not have disgraced an orator. She was famous for her composition of Gaelic songs,

set to the most exquisite airs, and filled with the most beautiful ideas and images. No event of consequence ever occurred in the family of the gentleman on whose farm she had long lived, without Lady Hood composing an ode for the occasion. The beauty of the language, the elevation of the sentiments, and the true poetic fervour which pervaded all her effusions, were most singular when we consider that she was perfectly uneducated and could speak only the Gaelic tongue.

Both the Ceannaiche and his friend Lady Hood lived to see more than ninety years. The former had sunk into a state of complete idiocy for some time before his death, but the intellect of Lady Hood was clear and vigorous to the last. She did not die of old age, but fell a victim to the kindness of her heart. She had always been extremely generous to all who were poorer than herself, and one evening when a beggar woman knocked at her door and craved a night's lodging, on the plea of feeling very ill, the request was cordially granted. The illness turned out to be a malignant fever. Lady Hood nursed the beggar woman, took the infection from her, and died.

The like of herself and the Ceannaiche will never be met with in Inverness-shire again. They, like many of the characters described in this book, could have existed only among the peculiar associations and surroundings of a time "Before Railways".

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